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RUSSIA IN THE ‘EIGHTIES’



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RUSSIA IN THE 'EIGHTIES'

SPORT AND POLITICS

BY

JOHN F. BADDELEY

AUTHOR OF 'THE RUSSIAN CONQUEST OF THE CAUCASUS,' AND
'RUSSIA, MONGOLIA, CHINA'

WITH TWO ILLUSTRATIONS AND FOUR MAPS

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TO
MY DEAR MOTHER'S MEMORY

PREFACE

THIS book covers the ten years during which I served the *Standard* as special correspondent in Russia. Count Peter Schouvaloff procured me the post ; on his death I gave it up ; in the interval we all but lived together ; he died in my arms.

His opinions, statements and recollections are transcribed from my notes and records written at the time, corrections or elucidations, where necessary, being given, with I think one exception, in footnotes.

One candid friend tells me that it is a fatal error to have mixed up sport and politics. My answer is that such was my life. Another, that no one cares the Duke of Wellington's "twopenny dam" for Russia in the 'eighties of last century. To that I reply—so much the worse for me ; but, after all, such criticism is aimed at history in general, not merely at my modest contribution to it.

The materials used are my diaries, notebooks, letters home, and correspondence in the *Standard*. What their value may be it is not for me to say ; but such as they are they authorise, in most cases down to the minutest detail, every opinion, story or statement in the following pages.

I have to thank, most cordially, my old friend Colonel E. St. C. Pemberton, R.E., for his kindness in reading through all my proofs and correcting many an error.

JOHN F. BADDELEY.

“What’s done we partly may compute
But know not what’s resisted.”

Burns.

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RUSSIA AND GERMANY—SCHOUVÁLOFF AND BISMARCK.

"At the time of the Crimean War he (Bismarck) advocated an alliance with Russia, and it was to a great extent owing to his advice that Prussia did not join the Western Powers." *Encycl. Britan.* Art. Bismarck.

"At the Berlin Congress (Count Peter) Schouváloff did Russia the greatest service in maintaining her interests as well as those of the Balkan nationalities. . . . Ten years more and all will be of this opinion. Meanwhile, before the open coffin of this great Russian Statesman, I feel it to be a debt to conscience and truth to give him his due, and acknowledge as wise what ten years ago I was ready, like the rest, to call treason to Russian interests." Prince Meshchérsky in the *Grajdánin*, 23rd March, 1889.

"Germany having been connected with Russia for many years by the ties of a sincere and mutually profitable alliance, he for one would think twice before giving up the friendship of so great and powerful a State without real necessity." Prince Bismarck's declaration in the Reichstag, 1882, quoted with emphatic approval by Mme. de Nóvikoff, who added "That real necessity has not arisen, and is not likely to arise." (See p. 150.)

"Bismarck, though the Russians these twenty years refuse to acknowledge or even recognise it, is a true friend to Russia, and does more for us than for any nation save his own." Count Paul Schouváloff in 1887. (See p. 350.) In June of that year he had signed in Berlin the "very secret" Protocol giving Russia a free hand in Bulgaria and the Straits. (See p. 324.)

"The friendship between Germany and Russia lasted until 1891. Bismarck was its inspirer. He sincerely fostered good relations with Russia." Miliúkov's statement, St. Petersburg. 7th April, 1917.

NOTE.

THE transliteration of Russian words into English presents various difficulties which I have attempted to solve at different times in different ways, none fully satisfactory. I have now so far given in to my friend Dr. Ch. Hagbery Wright as to use *j* instead of *zh* for the sound of French *j*; but whereas *zh* is a certain stumbling-block to the average reader, it seems a pity to represent two different sounds by one letter. However, all I wish to beg of the said reader—not, of course, of the more learned—is to remember that, roughly, in these Russian words and names *a* is broad as in *father*; *e* is *a* as in *able*; *i* is *e* as in *be*, never *i* as in *child*; and that *u* is *oo* as in *boom*, never *yu* as in *bugle*. I omit the unnecessary *t* before *ch* except in *Gortchakóff* and other names where it would now be missed. Finally, I have marked with a grave accent, where necessary, the one syllable in each Russian word upon which, in accordance with the genius of the language, strong emphasis is laid. There are, of course, many points of greater delicacy and difficulty as to which in such a notice as this it is better to say nothing.

CHAPTER I

The Crimean War—Author's birth—Russian friends—Count Peter Schouvaloff—A glass of wine—First visit to Russia—A lesson in Russian—Germany and Russia, a contrast—St. Petersburg—Mourino—Winter-shooting—Snow and snow-shoes—The *razvód*—Caucasian body-guard—Moscow—Winchester, *Mass.*—Learning Russian—An Easter greeting—Zúzino—In disgrace—Down the Volga—A rough journey—Home again—My Aunt Grace.

IN 1854, when France and England went to war with Russia, my father, Captain J. F. L. Baddeley, R.A., who held an appointment at Woolwich Arsenal, volunteered for active service, and on the 11th August started for the Crimea as adjutant to Lieut.-Colonel Noel T. Lake, R.A., commanding the artillery attached to the Light Division, leaving the present writer a weak and fretful infant, just a fortnight old. This bodily condition, which as near as possible put a premature end to my existence, was due to the anxiety caused my mother by the war. Thus my connection with Russia may be said to have begun at birth ; as it will only end with death.

My father, who died young, could not of course know, as he shivered in the trenches before Sevastopol, that in the opposite bastions was a Russian guardsman, a little younger than himself, who would in after years befriend his son, invite him to Russia, and, while both lived, treat him with all a father's kindness.

My mother was born and brought up in France, and to the day of her death, when well over eighty, retained a passionate love for that country, for the French, and for

all their ways, save only their republicanism—to that she never grew reconciled! She was of Irish and English blood, with a dose of Spanish; but her Gallic upbringing was, apparently, the dominating factor; and next to the French she loved the Russians, many of whom she met in Paris, Nice and, later, in Homburg and Baden-Baden. As children we rejoiced in the great boxes of crystallised fruit my mother's Russian friends used to send over from Nice at Christmas and Easter time for "*les chickens et les boys*" as one of them quaintly called us. They taught us to say *Běřǝghis* (Take care!) and a few more Russian words; and in 1874 the new Russian Ambassador, Count Peter Schouvaloff, brought a letter of introduction to us in London from one of them and soon became an established favourite in our merry household.

I remember well the crowd of 70,000 people, or thereabouts, that came together in Hyde Park one day, when Jingoism was at its height, to protest against the Treaty of San Stefano. They shouted and sang, to their hearts' content, "the Russians shall not have Constantinople"—or "pull" as they pronounced the last syllable, and in the exuberance of their spirits hurled dead cats and other objects high in air. Prince Teck, as he was then called,¹ was bonneted in mistake for Schouvaloff, but soon recognised and cheered, his battered hat brushed and handed back to him with profuse apologies. Schouvaloff himself, despite the remonstrances of the police told off to guard him, was present in the crowd, but, luckily, escaped recognition. He received at that time many hundreds of anonymous letters containing the vilest of threats, and, altogether, I retain a vivid sense of shame at the conduct of English men—and women—at that crisis. It would be pleasant to think that as a nation we had made some little progress in decency since then, but the treatment accorded to certain people during the great war merely because they happened to bear German

¹ Father of Her Gracious Majesty, Queen Mary.

names makes me doubt it. The meeting referred to took place in 1878, just before the Berlin Congress.

Some months later, at dinner one night in Chesham House, when the ladies had left the room, our host, poisoning his wine-glass, said, "What a nuisance it is; I must go to St. Petersburg at the end of this week!" and I said thoughtlessly, "Wouldn't *I* like to go!" Schouváloff turned to me quickly. "Come! Come to Russia with me! You shall see St. Petersburg and Moscow, perhaps shoot a bear, and I will bring you safe back within three weeks. I am going alone, and you will be doing me the greatest kindness." He spoke with such evident sincerity that I was moved to say "yes." Yet the whole thing was so sudden, so totally unexpected, that, in fact, I only mumbled incoherently something to the effect of being unable to get leave. He said no more for the moment, but, later, renewed his proposal in all seriousness to my mother and other relatives and friends with such effect that, presently, all doubts and difficulties were overcome, and it was decided that I should make the journey with him, leaving London, I think, three days later. Thus an unpremeditated word spoken at a dinner-table led to my undertaking a distant journey fraught with incalculable results to my own life and, necessarily, though indirectly, to the lives of others.

It was on or about the 20th February, 1879, that we started on this first of my many journeys to Russia. I think we took Paris on the way, but, as to that, memory and notes alike fail me. I remember, however, that we lodged at the Hotel Royal in Berlin, and that my companion left me pretty much to myself owing to visits he had to pay to Bismarck and other people of importance.

There were no sleeping or restaurant cars then, and the journey from London to St. Petersburg took nearly four days and nights, but in Russia railway travelling was always the best in the world, save only in regard to speed, and in Germany one could travel with some degree

of comfort in certain yellow carriages with square compartments if only they were not crowded, though more than once I had to sleep on the floor, glad to find room even there. With my present companion, of course, there was nothing of that sort to be feared. We were treated, indeed, like Royalty, but even Royalty cannot command flawless steel; the night after leaving Berlin a tyre of our engine cracked, and we were stranded far from human habitation for two hours and more until another locomotive came to take us on.

The night was frostily clear; the windless air keen; the earth crisp underfoot as we two walked up and down in a field beside the railway-track, to stretch our legs and pass the time. Overhead the stars shone with rare brilliancy. Northwards a belt of fir-trees on a ridge showed black against the sky; elsewhere the open country, whitened by the frost, faded mistily to the low horizon. I made some remark as to the beauty of the scene. "Beautiful indeed," said my friend; then, pointing to the Great Bear, "what do you call that?" I named it, and he repeated my words, adding, "It is the same in Russian, *bolshaya medviéditsa*; and that?" "The Pole Star." "*Poliárnyaya zviésdá.*" He made me say the Russian words after him, passing from one object to another, and expressed approval of my efforts at pronunciation. "But it is well-known," said he, "that the English, of all foreigners, have the greatest facility for speaking Russian; the German accent is horrible, while the French fail from their habit of distributing the stress equally, whereas with us every single word has one and only one strongly accented syllable. No Frenchman, for instance, calls me Schouváloff, but always Schoüvålöff. Your Englishman with his Shóvel-off is wrong, but he might be right; the Frenchman never could be!"¹

¹ The Ambassadors in London from the Courts of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia were then Counts Münster, Beust and Schouváloff. The latter was much amused at the current joke which converted them into Monster, Beast and Shuffle-off!

From stars, planets and constellations we passed to the words for night and morning, for day, dawn and darkness; then to things of the country—field and hedgerow, grass and trees—and so by easy transition to the birds and beasts of moorland, marsh and forest. My companion's feelings kindled to enthusiasm as he spoke of the chase, for which hitherto in his busy life he had found scant leisure; but he felt rather than knew that this would no longer be the case, for he had not yet realised that the whole obloquy for the Berlin Treaty would, most unjustly, be cast upon him; that, in fact, his career as a statesman was even now ended.

This two hours' walk and talk under the stars drew us nearer together than all our previous intercourse; it was my first Russian lesson and, looking back, it seems to form a fitting prelude to the ensuing years during which, in his enforced retirement, shooting was to be his one great solace, I his inseparable companion.

Next day, before reaching the frontier, Schouvaloff donned his uniform of "General-aide-de-camp," which became him well; also some of his many orders and medals—he had enough of them, as he told me, with an expressive gesture, to plaster himself with all over, back and front! He cared little for such things in general, but was rather proud of the St. Vladimir of the 1st Class, his highest Russian honour, and would assuredly have liked the St. Andrew, the Garter of Russia, the only Russian order of importance never given him. He had been greatly impressed by the fact that Lord Derby had refused the Garter because—according to him—he was going to speak against the Government next day.¹

¹ I leave, as always, Schouvaloff's statement as I took it down at the time, but the facts as to this refusal are that Disraeli offered the Garter to the colleague who had abandoned him on the 31st March, 1878, and the latter refused it next day. It was in July, after the signature of the Berlin Treaty, that Lord Derby attacked the Government, revealing without permission the Cabinet secrets of March 27th. See *Life of Benjamin Disraeli*, etc., vol. vi. p. 270.

Gladstone, he remarked, had also refused it, "but he was an *illuminé*." It was inconceivable that a Russian should say no to the St. Andrew, and for such a reason! Accepting my compliments with a smile, he said, "You will see that in my own country I really am 'somebody.'"

And indeed it was so. On the platform at Virjbalóvo (Wirballen) stood, drawn up in line, a company of Gendarmerie, that picked semi-military corps of ex-soldiers, which in its modern form owed its organisation to Schouvalóff, and, while it existed, looked to him as to its real founder. The Governor of the Province was there, and the General commanding the frontier troops, with many other officials and officers. I heard for the first time the inspiring Russian chorus to which troops of all arms were trained, *Zdrávie jeláyem váshe . . . stvó!* "Health we wish——" the blank being filled by the title of the person addressed. There were hand-shakings, salutes and those embraces between men that seem so strange, at first, to phlegmatic Britons. I was overcome with shyness at being introduced to all these important people; but kindness and tact on my friend's part and on theirs soon brought relief. We were taken to the royal apartments, where a lavish breakfast, my first Russian meal, was ready on the table. My luggage, meantime, was passed without examination, my passport not even inscribed.

Crossing the frontier from Germany into Russia for the first time was an experience no one would be likely to forget. Geographical separation there was none, unless we count as such the little river, not much bigger than a ditch, that served here as a boundary between the two empires. The natural conditions were the same on either side of this stream; but in all that regards man and his handiwork the contrast could hardly have been greater had an ocean rolled between. I will not enlarge on the subject, for that would involve a comparison between German—or at least Prussian—and Muscovite, for which

a volume such as this would hardly suffice ; but, in essentials, the difference was as I described it before the revolution. " In East Prussia the sandy soil is made to produce all it can ; the fields are laboriously ploughed and manured, the hedges or fences, if any, are strong and well kept. Every wood is a plantation ; each tree by the roadside has been put there for a purpose ; the roads are made roads ; the cottages, farms and town buildings are substantial and clean. Everything belonging to or run by the State is the best of its kind. On the Russian side—beyond the frontier station itself—we find just the reverse. There, no towns are visible till you get to Kovno and Vilna, with their unsavoury Hebrew populations ; the wooden cottages of the peasantry have a dirty tumble-down appearance ; the roads are mere tracks ; the clearings, scratched with a primitive plough, produce, probably, the minimum crop of which the soil is capable ; the snake-fences serve rather to indicate boundaries than to keep in or out any living thing, while the bearded Russian *moujik*, in his greasy sheepskin and high boots, looks a ragged object beside the peasant or farmer across the border. The comparison, so it seems, is all in favour of Germany ; but let us go a little further, and ask to what extent these external signs and evidences represent real and vital differences between the two peoples ? For represent them they must. You cannot have this contrast existing in one and the same country and climate without some corresponding difference in the very blood and being of the men and women themselves. Well, without going very deeply into the matter, we may say that while the Prussian is drilled, disciplined, de-individualised to the highest possible degree, the Muscovite is none of those things. Oppressed he has been—is still—but just as in the worst days of serfdom, he retained a sense of certain rights—the right to the land he cultivated, for instance—so in our day he has in more ways than one a feeling

or rather a capacity for freedom that is by no means incompatible with a reverence for autocracy, paradoxical as this may sound. He is careless, fatalistic, essentially religious—friendly and winning when his evil passions are not roused, but cruel and brutal on occasion. The Russian is not, as for a time was chorused abroad, in allied countries, a sort of newly-discovered super-angel. He is nothing of the sort; but just a human being compounded like all others of good and evil—with this difference, as compared to his western neighbours, that his soul is more primitive, less trammelled by convention, less spoilt by "culture" spelt with or without a "K," less developed, and therefore more open to development than the soul of any Westerns, including the civilised peoples of America. It is difficult to conceive a western nation doing or becoming anything different in kind from what it has done or been before. But as we contemplate the Russians unknown possibilities open dimly on our view, vague and vast like some great cloudland wherein faint gleams of light and colour seem to promise fresh splendours—whether of calm or storm who shall say? In any case, the future of the world must depend largely—perhaps mainly—on what the Slav race, under the spiritual if not political hegemony of Russia, will do and become—a fact that many look upon with misgiving and even dread, but one that to me, personally, seems fraught with highest hope."¹

Meantime, the immediate effect of Russian scenery and Russian surroundings upon me was distinctly depressing. My spirits sank below zero as we rumbled along through the white wilderness under leaden skies. But, though the weather, the dark woods, the tumble-down dwellings, broken fences and general air of poverty and neglect had their share in it, I believe my mood was due largely to shyness, to the fear of strangers, the uncomfortable knowledge that I should soon have to enter one after

¹ This was written in 1915. May it yet prove true

another strange drawing-rooms and converse with charming but unknown ladies in French.

I took refuge in my vocabularies, and marking first such words as bore resemblance to their equivalents in English, and were in fact cognate, such as *mied*—honey (mead), *nos*—nose, *brovi*—eyebrows, *beet*—to beat, *buk*—beech (our book, too), *strelá*—arrow (*strael* in Anglo-Saxon and, still, in the Sussex dialect); next, words obviously derived from other European languages, of which in Russian there are many thousands, including whole categories such as the Greek words in religion, the Dutch in seafaring;¹ and finally, not despising even the most fanciful mnemonic aids, I succeeded in acquiring a stock of some three hundred words before reaching St. Petersburg, a number, as Professor Marsh tells us, sufficient to furnish forth the libretto of an average Italian opera.

I "did" the sights of St. Petersburg somewhat perfunctorily in the course of a week or so, and called upon some of the people to whom I had brought introductions; but social obligations have always lain heavily upon me, and as it never entered my mind that I should come back to Russia, to live, my conduct in this respect was less exemplary than it might have been. If I mention dinners to which Colonel Leopold Swaine,² military attaché, and Mr. Masterman of Messrs. Thomson, Bonar, the bankers, invited me, it is only because they signalise my first contact with the British Embassy and British colony respectively, and with both of these during many years I enjoyed intimate and happy relations.

Two episodes, during this first short visit of mine to St. Petersburg, seem worthy of mention for a similar reason, that is, their relation to future events and to my life and work in Russia.

¹ Dr. R. van der Meulen in his *De Hollandsche Zee- en Scheepstermen in het Russisch*, Amsterdam, Johannes Müller, 1909, gives 1369 such words.

² Now Major-general Sir Leopold Swaine, K.C.B.

One day Schouvaloff, having paid his visits to the Emperor and Empress, and to Prince Gortchakóff and others, said, "Now, Iván Ivánovich, I'm going to have a day off and take you shooting. We have no big game ringed just now—the weather has made tracking impossible—but we will go to Mourino and drive the woods there on chance. We shall probably get a fox or two and a few hares, possibly some birds. At all events, you will have a *troika*-drive and see something of the country. Be here at 8 a.m. sharp and breakfast with me before leaving." This was the first of hundreds of similar invitations. As a rule they were given orally, but now and then by written notes, many of which I still have. For instance, "Dear Iván Ivánovich, you are a lazy log—the sport will be good I think. Please be here at 8 a.m. ready to start." The accusation—more or less deserved—is in English, the rest in Russian. Another runs, "Five wolves at Toksovo—be here at 7 sharp to-morrow morning. I have asked Pólovtseff, Prince Golítsin, Astashóff, von Schweinitz." Who these were will be evident later.

We drove down to Mourino in a sleigh drawn by three slashing chestnuts belonging to Schouvaloff's nephew, Pável Pávlovich ("Paul, son of Paul," his only brother) a racing *troika*, in fact. The day was fine, the road in good order thanks to snow that had fallen in the night, and the rapid movement most exhilarating. Mourino is a village lying 12 miles north of St. Petersburg; even now no railway goes near it, and the road with its breadth of badly-set cobble-stones, flanked in summer on either side, according to the weather, by quagmires or dust-heaps alternately, is an abomination save when the friendly snow lies firm and even upon it. Yet over it for the better part of a century Englishmen have ridden, driven, walked and lately motored; for Mourino has for generations been the summer home of the Whishaws, Andersons, Cattleys and others, the core of the old

English colony, and though now perforce abandoned by them and shorn of its former amenities, is still—or was lately—a centre of attraction as possessing the first and only golf-links in Russia. The place, however, had by degrees become little desirable as a residence owing to the drunken, over-grown village population, and to the fact that not only the broad belt of forest beyond the Okhta, but nearly all trees save those in the English gardens and the Russian churchyard had been long since cut down, leaving bare and wind-blown the Mourino of old, which, with its river winding erratically between hilly banks, had been, without doubt, one of the prettiest places within easy reach of the capital.¹

We crossed the Okhta and drove some three versts beyond it to the edge of the Deviátkina bogs, where for years I was destined to trudge each autumn after willow-grouse, duck, snipe, golden plover and other birds of the moorland and fen. But for the present the open country had no attractions; the trackers on their *lji* (French *i* and *j*) or *ski*, ringed section after section of the forest consisting of pine and spruce, with occasional aspen, birch and alder; and the beaters, in turn, drove the game towards us. I shot a fox for the first time, but my mind was occupied by the novelty of the scene and the beauty of the winter woods rather than by the sport itself. Indeed, with a pretty full share of man's natural instinct to chase and kill, I was never quite free from reservations and qualms on the score of cruelty, and eventually, after shooting a great deal of game, big and small, I dropped it, on Schouvaloff's death (1889), without regret and even with a sense of relief. Did not

¹ It has a name in history, too, or should have, for when Nicholas I., in 1842, issued an ukase by which, in a tentative way, landed proprietors were graciously permitted to free their serfs, the first to take advantage of it was Count Vorontsóf on this his estate of Mourino. His example was followed by two other noblemen, Prince Wittgenstein and Count Potocki, neither of them Russians, but there the matter ended.

Oswell himself, the friend of Livingstone, acknowledge in the end that he was sorry sometimes for the grand old beasts he had killed? and Oswell, surely, was a king amongst hunters. I echo his compunction. But, meantime, this first act of vulpicide had its use. I had been brought up with an average Englishman's prejudices, including that which made the killing of a fox by any means but one, however merciful, and whatever the circumstance of time and place, an abomination. I now debated the matter in my mind, came to the only reasonable conclusion, and this helped to confirm me in what was then an incipient habit only—for I was mentally of somewhat slow growth—the habit, namely, of thinking things out for myself.

As to the pleasure of the woods in winter it is none the less real that it is best described by negatives—no heat; no wind; neither dust nor dirt; no insect pests; no noise! But everywhere virginal white purity and the stillness and silence that consecrate it: or if any sound there be—the rare twittering of a bird; the flutter of a tree-grouse, perching; the fall of crusted snow; the muffled crackling of ice over shrunken waters in ditch or pool—its volume is magnified and it strikes the ear with unwonted and even mysterious significance. But to enjoy the forest depth in fullest measure you must have struggled desperately on your *ski* against a blizzard on open hill-top or plateau till strength and endurance are strained to the utmost; then from the windy brow glide swiftly down—down through the trees, till you draw breath in the heart of the woods, where only the rustle and sough in the branches overhead serve to remind you that the storm still rages.

But there is more, much more, to be said for the northern winter. One may be frozen to death in Arctic regions; one may die of heat in Central Africa; but people who inhabit either very cold or very warm climates dress—or do not—accordingly; so that, on the whole, the

sufferers from extremes of temperature are those who inhabit temperate climes. A Samoyed hardly knows what cold is, or a negro heat. That is one paradox it may be well to bear in mind when considering life in the far North; another is that ice and snow which, between them, dislocate traffic, interrupt communication, and, in general, go far to make life unbearable in the temperate zone, have precisely the opposite effect in higher latitudes. Roads, there, being rare or unknown, progression in summer depends almost exclusively on the waterways, on ways, that is to say, rigidly marked out by Nature. In spring the melting snow, in autumn heavy rainfalls, followed in either case by floods, are apt to make even the rivers of no avail. But when winter sets in, when the waters are frozen and deep snow covers the land, all locks are unfastened, all bars removed. Man, in so far as locomotion can give sovereignty, is, in very deed, "monarch of all he surveys." In sledges drawn by dog, horse or deer, he can go almost anywhere, do almost anything, while with snow-shoes strapped to his feet his range becomes practically unlimited, more especially when, as with the northern tribes, the under sides of the shoes are covered with skins of seal or reindeer, with the hair set backwards to prevent slipping on a rise. The skin-clad shoe has, moreover, the yet greater advantage of being always "runnable," since the snow in the worst of thaws never balls on its hairy under-surface. In short, the snow-shoe, *ski*, or *liji*, more especially the long narrow glider of the ancient Finn—he of the Kálevala—who used, on his other foot, only a short plank to thrust with, may well have been that magic arrow of Abaris the Hyperborean, upon which—as he told Pythagoras—he could cross "streams, lakes, swamps, and mountains."¹ That is just what the snow-shoe enables

¹ The Kálevala, one of the world's great poems—epic is hardly the name for it—may best be read, in English, in the excellent version of Mr. J. M. Crawford (New York, 1889). The story of Abaris is in

us to do, and it is no exaggeration to say that for freedom of movement in every direction there is nothing on dry land to compare with the snow-covered surface of a northern country to the man who can use his *ski*.

While the Emperor Alexander II. lived it was his custom, when in St. Petersburg during the brief social season from New Year's day to the beginning of Lent, to hold a *razvód*, or review of the troops of the day, in the great Michael *manège*, or riding-school, each Sunday. The ceremony took place before luncheon and was a very brilliant affair, being largely attended by the Court and by the ambassadors and staffs of the various embassies and legations with their wives and their daughters. Non-official foreigners had little chance of gaining admittance on these occasions; but on the Sunday after our arrival in St. Petersburg Schouvaloff took me in and I enjoyed a sight soon to be numbered with things of the past. There were squadrons and companies splendidly mounted and equipped, Chevaliers-gardes, Gardes-à-cheval, snub-nosed men of the Paul Regiment, Horse-grenadiers, Preobrajénsky Guards and others,¹ but the main interest lay in the presence of the Emperor's Caucasian body-guard, which in those days was drawn from all the chief mountain tribes, including the Pshavs, Tusheens and Khevsours. These wild riders performed various

Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica*, Lipsiæ, 1815, chap. 28, p. 287. An aeroplane seems to be indicated, at first reading, and Abaris is surnamed *Aithrobates*, but any *ski*-man will endorse the view that this is merely hyperbolic!

¹ The Chevaliers-gardes and the Gardes-à-cheval answered to our Life Guards and Horse Guards. The Emperor Paul having himself a snub-nose raised a new guard-regiment in which snub-noses were *de rigueur*. The Preobrajénsky foot-guards, the premier Russian regiment, had been formed by Peter the Great when a boy, at the village of Preobrajénskoe near Moscow, at first as living toys. Their barracks were in the Milliønnaya, opposite Schouvaloff's house, separated from the Imperial Hermitage and the Winter Palace by the narrow Winter Canal, but with access to both, by gallery-bridges, as a reward for their fidelity in 1825, at the time of the Decabrist rising.

manœuvres and feats of horsemanship, culminating in a frantic charge up the centre of the *manège* to the very feet of the Emperor and his brilliant staff. A little less than two years later, on the 1st March, 1881, the *razvód* was held as usual in spite of warning: the Emperor then lunched with the Grand Duchess Catherine at the Michael Palace, and on leaving it to return to the Winter Palace was cruelly assassinated.¹ His successor, for reasons of economy, did away with the bodyguard as it then existed—formed of units from many tribes each dressed in its own costume—and instituted instead a force composed of Ossietines and Cossacks from the Terek and Koubán rivers, all dressed alike in the blue *cherkess* for ordinary wear, the scarlet for special occasions.² It was many years later that I paid a visit to the Khevsours in their mountain fastnesses, and had for guide, up a ten thousand-foot snow-covered pass, one of the tribe clad in hauberk of chain-mail, with iron shield, sword, dagger and rifle, and a bridle decorated alternately with cowrie-shells and beads of turquoise blue.

I went on to Moscow fully intending to stay there at most four or five days. Friends in England had supplied me with letters of introduction to various people, of whom a Prince Shakhovskói and his wife, in particular, showed me warm hospitality—for a time. The Prince, however, had served with the Red Cross during the war, and he could not refrain from mentioning the sinister part played by England against Russia, including the

¹ See page 106.

² *Cherkess* is the Russian form of the name from which Europe has derived the word Circassian. It belongs properly to the noble people who call themselves *Adighe*; but is loosely applied by travellers to almost any Caucasians. *Cherkess* is also used for the long loose-sleeved garment which, with the silver-mounted belt and cartridge cases across the breast, forms a well-known and picturesque article of attire. In the form *Cherkas* it was applied to the Little Russian Cossacks; hence Novoherkask, on the Don.

supply of arms to the Turks. When I ventured to doubt this he went into another room and brought back a rifle, saying, "There! I picked that up myself on the battle-field; read the inscription on it." I read accordingly, "Winchester, Mass." and had no little difficulty in persuading him that "Mass." stood for Massachusetts! Schouvaloff had given me a letter to Prince Dolgorúkov, the octogenarian Governor-General of Moscow, a city founded by his ancestor, and he, too, treated me graciously—*for a time!*

In a guide-book sense one can see Moscow comfortably enough in the course of very few days, but the individual sights, beautiful and interesting as some of them are, count little, to my mind, in comparison with the general aspect of the city as seen from various points of vantage; or with the view of the citadel, the historic Kremlin, with its battlemented walls and towers, its palaces, monasteries and golden-domed churches.¹ All this one can never tire of; the days may stretch to weeks, the weeks to years, and at the end of a life-time Moscow be more attractive than ever. One's first impression, however, in all such cases is something apart; and the spell was still upon me when one day in the reading-room of the *Slavíánski Bazar*, then the chief hotel, I entered into casual conversation with a young Frenchman. We had talked for some minutes on the theme my mind was filled with, when he rose, saying, "Pray excuse me, I must go back to my work." I ventured to ask, what work? "I am learning Russian." "Learning Russian! But is not that very, very difficult?" "Oh, no; I am a doctor and wish to practise in Russia; for that one must take one's degree in Russian. I have been studying four months and in four more hope to pass my examination." I was astonished, incredulous. All the rest of that day, and indeed half the night, I could think of

¹ The Moscovite's favourite epithets for his beloved city are *biéló-kámennaya*, *zláto-glávaya*—white-walled, golden-headed.

little else. Next morning I saw my friend again and in less than an hour had arranged to stay in Moscow a month, take rooms with him in a *pension*, and work at Russian as if life itself depended on it. This programme we carried out rigorously. We worked twelve hours a day all that time, our only relaxation, as a rule, being half an hour's walk on the Kremlin terrace once or twice in the twenty-four hours. I used French-Russian dictionary and grammar, and both were worn to rags by the end of the month. I adopted the plan of marking with a pencil every word I looked out; at the end of thirty days there were 7,000 marks in the dictionary—many words, of course, having half-a-dozen marks or more. To clear the brain I read a few pages of *Don Quixote* in Spanish each night before going to sleep.

The knowledge my new friend had already acquired was, of course, very useful to me. We endeavoured from the beginning to talk Russian between ourselves and to exchange words and phrases with the servants, who entered into the game with true Russian intelligence and good-nature. This led to a characteristic incident. On Easter morning our red-shirted "boots" came into my room and presented me with a red egg saying, in Orthodox fashion, *Khrístós voskréss* ("Christ has arisen"). I was rather proud to be able to make the proper answer, *Vo istinu voskréss* ("He has indeed arisen"), but somewhat taken aback when the good fellow throwing his arms round my neck kissed me fervently on both cheeks!

I could soon read the telegrams from London and elsewhere in the *Moscow Gazette* and follow, fairly well, the daily column of abuse of Lord Beaconsfield and his policy; I could recite whole poems of Pushkin and Lérmontoff; but in regard to speech very little progress could be claimed; so, purchasing a couple of red cotton shirts, a pair of long boots and a leather belt, I procured an introduction to the widow of a priest who with her grown-up sons dwelt in the village of Zúzino, a few versts

south of Moscow, and, after a preliminary visit to make the necessary arrangements, transferred myself and my belongings thither.

The old lady was just a peasant woman, but the men were educated and had employment in some Moscow bank. Their hours were so easy, however, and holidays so frequent that they were able to devote a great deal of their time to teaching me Russian. I occupied an empty cottage, slept on a loose door supported by chairs, washed at a pump in the yard and let my beard grow. With the villagers I soon made friends, and followed them in all their occupations, even to ploughing a furrow or two—very crookedly no doubt. I fed with the family, mostly on bread and butter, potatoes, cabbage-soup and buck-wheat porridge, with plenty of good milk; and throve upon this homely fare. I continued to read, but devoted myself mainly to conversation, speaking to anyone and every one of these friendly folk from the youngest urchins to the village grandfathers.

At the end of this second month I returned to Moscow filled with pleasurable anticipation of the renewed and warmer welcome my aristocratic friends would extend to the foreigner who in so short a time had learnt to read and even speak, however imperfectly, their beautiful language. I called at the Governor-General's palace—his "shiningness" (*siyátelstvo*) was in, but very much engaged. I left a card which was not returned. My next visit was to the Shakhovskóis. They were said to be out—after an awkward pause. A certain General S—— who had been most anxious to take me to his country house on a long visit had, apparently, forgotten my existence, and so with others. Next day I found the Shakhovskóis in, but met with a chilling reception. The princess especially, a rather pretty woman, showed no interest in my new accomplishment, though she had been one of the first to urge it, and would only talk French. It was some little time before I discovered the meaning

of this puzzling change ; but, finally, an acquaintance more frank than the rest let me into the secret. My conduct in dressing like the peasants and going to live amongst them was in itself highly reprehensible—suggestive, at least, of revolutionary sympathies. The fact of my being an Englishman somewhat confused the issue, for whatever else might be charged against them no Englishmen, so far, had ever been known to indulge in revolutionary propaganda in Russia. What then could it mean ? The solution arrived at after no very long cogitation was that I was in all probability neither more nor less than a spy—a secret agent of the arch-fiend Beaconsfield ; and though the credit attached to this theory never, perhaps, amounted to conviction, it sufficed to involve me in a cloud of suspicion and mistrust dense enough effectually to spoil the pleasure of any further stay in Moscow. Yet I was hardly angry ; indeed, amusement had the upper hand even then ; and now, looking back, I am only astonished at the kindness and courtesy shewn me by Russians, of all ranks, so soon after the Turkish war and bitter disillusionment of the Berlin Treaty. As some of them said later on : “ Think of it ! We have gone to war for the liberation of our brother Slavs : we had suffered heavy losses in men and money ; we had eventually fought our way to victory—and then, under the very walls of Constantinople—Tsargrad, the city of our dreams—we were told, ‘ Enter at your peril ; one step further and England declares war.’ ” Tears stood in the eyes of bearded men, companions of Skóbeleff—I am thinking more particularly of my friend the late General Vereshchágin, brother of the artist—as they told me this, even twenty years later.

Another point against me in aristocratic circles in Moscow was that, through my French friend, I had made the acquaintance of certain medical students at the university. With one of these, who had just passed

his final examination, I now set off to visit an estate in the Government of Samára, which had been granted to his ancestors, but never yet seen by any member of the family. It consisted of a stretch of open steppe near the confines of Asia, of no value in existing conditions, save for the crop of hay it produced. For this the owners had hitherto received but a nominal sum each year, by far the greater part of the rent going into the pocket of a rascally agent whom we were now to expose with highly satisfactory results. We went first to Nijni Nóvgorod and thence down the Volga to Khvalínsk, where we took horses to Nicolayevsk and beyond, passing one unhappy night in the felt tent of a rich Bashkir who fed us only too liberally on *koumuis*, mutton and rice. We found that, after all, the estate, tenanted only, as far as we could see, by great-bustards, was considerably nearer to Samára than to Khvalínsk, so, having done our business, selling the crop for several hundred roubles to the Cossacks of Urálsk, we drove on to the first-named town, stopping but just long enough to change ponies every 50 versts. We arrived at Samára thoroughly exhausted, and with every bone and muscle aching after a six days' journey of 470 versts (313 miles) in an open springless cart—a compromise between the *teléga* and the *tarantáss*—during which we had rarely slept more than two hours at a stretch, never more than four, and had only once had what might fairly be called a meal. Moreover, we had been devoured by all manner of flying, creeping and crawling things, exposed to a blazing sun by day and bitter cold at night with, always, clouds of dust. It was my first experience of roughing it in Russia and a useful one. On the whole I enjoyed it, in spite of discomfort; and, of course, my knowledge of Russian grew apace.

From Samára my companion returned to Moscow while I went leisurely on, in haphazard fashion, to Tsarítsin, to the Don and to the Crimea, and even crossed the

Strait of Yenikálě from Kertch on a flying visit to Ekaterinodar in the Caucasus. Eventually, after visiting Constantinople, Naples, Rome and Venice, I took ship at Trieste for Liverpool, and reached London early in October after an absence from home of a little more than seven months.

Within this period I had expended all but sixpence, precisely, of what capital I possessed in the world. The total was not great, some £250, derived from a legacy of £100 left me, as a child, by an uncle by marriage, General William Fraser. His wife, my father's sister Grace, born in the early years of the nineteenth century, had died childless long before the date of my birth. He, at death, left what little money he possessed to my mother and her children.

I have a silhouette portrait in black of my aunt, taken in the twenties of last century, showing her a charmingly pretty creature, looking at whom I reflect with strangely mingled feelings that but for her attractions she would, in all probability, not have made that particular marriage; the General would not have left me the sum of one hundred pounds sterling; I should, perhaps, never have set foot on Russian soil; and this book would not have been written.

We are, however, always and in all things the sport of circumstance. But for the war and the consequent rise in the price of paper, printing, binding and what else goes to the production of a book, I should have made this an *Edition de luxe*, profusely illustrated; and—to say nothing of birds, beasts, and fishes; diplomatists and statesmen; nihilists and the bureaucrats who created them—I should not have failed to present to my readers the *silhouette* of my aunt Grace.

CHAPTER II

Second invitation to Russia—I am rejected by the *Times* and *Daily News*—"Labby" intervenes—Engagement by the *Standard*—Second journey to Russia—Schouvaloff on the Russian Press—Lord Dufferin and Disraeli—A Hielan' poacher—Schouvaloff as scapegoat—Arrival at St. Petersburg—Russian friends and acquaintances—Peter and Paul—The *corps diplomatique*—Austrian friends—Attachés, naval and military—The Silver Greyhound—The British Colony—Sports and pastimes—John Hughes, miner—Saints big and little—My colleagues.

SCHOUVÁLOFF had, naturally enough, been much disturbed at my decision to remain in Moscow instead of returning to St. Petersburg and London with him, as agreed. His letter was quite pathetic: "How can I go back without you? What shall I say to your people? I promised faithfully to bring you home safe and sound in three weeks, and now they will reproach me with having left you in a savage country to be devoured by bears or wolves!" I was really very sorry to put him in such a predicament, but it braced me to a supreme effort; for, obviously, nothing could justify me in anyone's eyes but success in the task I had undertaken.

Schouvaloff was away when I reached London, but, when we did meet, his delight at finding that I could really talk Russian after a fashion, and read it quite well, was good to see. "*Udivítelno* (wonderful), Iván Ivánovich! Bravo! But now you must certainly come back to Russia with me and perfect yourself in the language. I am leaving England for good this time, and I

promise that you shall shoot bears and wolves and all sorts of things to your heart's content." "It is very tempting; you are most kind; but the truth is I have no more money to spend. I have to earn my own living!" "Well, why not in Russia?" "How can I? all I am fit for is to scribble for the newspapers!" His face lit up. "The very thing! You shall be *Times* correspondent in St. Petersburg!" "But," I objected, "even if I could get the post, I don't know that I should be able to fill it. I have no experience." "Nonsense! leave that to me. Look here; go to the Editor of the *Times* to-morrow and say that if he will be so good as to call at Chesham House I will undertake to satisfy him that you will be the best-informed correspondent in Russia."

Accordingly, having procured an introduction, I called upon Mr. Chenery and put the matter before him. He listened patiently, but said: "I quite see that your position would be exceptional, but we have, already, a correspondent there, and, really, we cannot turn him out to put you in." "Oh, not for the world! I am quite ashamed of myself: it never entered my head that you had someone already. How stupid of me!"

Crestfallen, I took my leave, with little inclination to try elsewhere. A friend, however, put the matter before Henry Labouchere, who knew me personally and all about me, and was part proprietor of the *Daily News*. That journal, it appeared, was also in the happy position of having a correspondent in St. Petersburg who performed his difficult duty to the editor's entire satisfaction, but "Labby" sent me a letter from his friend Horace Voules to William Mudford of the *Standard*, which letter I presented in person soon afterwards. The effect was remarkable. Mudford, a man of great energy, talent and decision, had complete control of the *Standard*, being not merely editor but trustee for the widow and children of the defunct proprietor. He had already

made the paper a startling success, and with a view to improving the position still more was bent upon securing the lead over all competitors in foreign correspondence. He had done much already ; Russia alone baffled him. The then well-known *Standard* correspondent, Frederick Boyle,¹ had been expelled by the Russian authorities at the close of the war and no efficient substitute found. My visit came pat. "Can you write?" "Plain English, yes : I am on the *Observer*." "Oh ! one of Dicey's young men ; that's good enough."² You know French ? " "Well." "How about Russian ? Do you think you could learn enough of it to read the papers ?" "I already read and to some extent speak it." "Capital ! Tell Count Schouváloff that I will be with him at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning. Come and see me afterwards—at 12." The interview may have lasted two minutes, or three at most

Next morning I was in Shoe Lane at the appointed time, to be greeted with, "I have seen Count Schouváloff and am quite satisfied. When can you start for St. Petersburg ?" "To-morrow." "Well, there's no such hurry as that ; but go soon. You must understand that I expect the *Standard* to be first, or at least not second, with any news of importance. You need not write letters, unless on special occasions. Get all you can through by telegraph and as quickly as possible. Now as to terms. You can go out for three months on trial ; if you succeed you can then have a two or three years' engagement. How much do you want to begin with ?" "Well, it is an expensive place. I must live in one of the best hotels and keep good company. Two pounds a day will only cover expenses." "We will say £75 a month, the journey out, and, of course, all telegraphic outlay. You will want something to start with. I

¹ Author of *Narrative of an expelled correspondent*, 1887 ; *Adventures among the Dyaks*, 1865 ; and several other books.

² Edward Dicey was at that time Editor of the *Observer*.

will write you a cheque for £150, on account." He did so, shook hands, and a minute later I was in Fleet Street on my way home—very much astonished, but, as a matter of fact, not very jubilant, for the responsibility I had just incurred lay somewhat heavy upon me. The interview had lasted ten minutes.

I left London for St. Petersburg the second time on December 5th, 1879, and passed the night at the Hotel Christol, Boulogne, the line to Paris being blocked by snow. Schouvaloff had gone to Cannes—I think to confer with Gortchakoff—and was similarly delayed so that it was only on the 11th that he joined me in Berlin after a journey involving, for him, no little hardship. Next day he was to go to Varzin to see Bismarck, but postponed his visit, being unwell.

We lodged again at the Hotel Royal. At lunch he said, "In regard to the press the Russian Government is worse off than any other in Europe. Every paper opposes it. If one of them is fined, or suppressed for a time, its editor waits to see whether or not the consequent popularity is likely to compensate for the loss and acts accordingly. If *yes*, after a short interval of mildness, bang he goes again! If *no*, he promises to behave better—and for a time does so, but only for a time! No Russian paper is 'inspired,' though some, of course, are purely official. The effect in Russia of General Roberts' drastic treatment of war-correspondents in India is that the authorities say, 'See what the English do, with a *free* press; surely we may do at least as much.'"¹

"The *Standard* wants me to accompany the Merv expeditionary force." "I don't think there is the least chance of your being allowed to do so." "In that case

¹ Lord Roberts had expelled the correspondent of a London paper from his camp for gross breach of trust in December, 1878. He took care that there should be nothing of the sort next year. *Forty-one Years in India*, chap. xlvii.

I think of going to the Caucasus or even Persia to get as near as possible to the scene of action." "Probably you will do better by far to remain in St. Petersburg, where it will be possible to learn what happens sooner and convey it to England quicker; but we will talk about this later on." Eventually I decided that this was in fact the more reasonable course, but it was only with extreme reluctance that I gave up the adventure.

"The English," he went on, "are extraordinarily careless and indifferent in public affairs. Lord Dufferin was actually returning to his post (St. Petersburg) without seeing either Beaconsfield or Salisbury, till I persuaded him to have a conversation with, at least, one of them.

Presently he said, "While Dizzy was still a commoner, and not in office, the great difficulty when he came to dinner was to arrange matters so that he should not be, too obviously, the least important person present."¹

"I found, however, I could always make him happy by saying, 'My dear Mr. Disraeli, will you take in that very pretty lady?' and you know my dinners were famous for pretty women.

"He has on his table, when he receives people, three copies of the *Morning Post*—no other papers. Yet if that journal publishes, as it does, insults to Russia, he says, taking my right hand in both of his, 'Oh, my dear Count Schouvaloff, the *Morning Post* is an independent paper; ours is a *free* press, you know; quite *impossible* to control it!' On the other hand if, say, even the *Gólos*, an opposition paper, speaks a word against England, it is at once fathered on the Russian Government!"

¹ This is borne out by a passage in a letter addressed by Disraeli to Lady Chesterfield, July 25, 1875: "Yesterday I dined at Holland House, a banquet, 4 and 20 at least. As they were all grandees, I went out, as usual, last, and feared I should be as badly off as at 'Lady A's [Aylesbury's] and dine, as I did there, between two men; but, as I entered, a faithful groom of the chamber took me under his care, and deposited me, by the instructions of the lady of the house, next to S. [his adored Selina, Lady Bradford]." *Life of Benjamin Disraeli, first Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. v. p. 390.

This was true but specious; for the Russian press, though not "inspired," was mercilessly dealt with for its misdemeanours against its own Government, which must be held to have approved what it failed to punish. This Schouvaloff acknowledged on another occasion.¹

Count Khreptóvich, Grand Chamberlain at the Russian Court, who was passing through Berlin the reverse way, dined with us. He was Russian Ambassador in London after the Crimean War, and told us that his predecessor, Baron Brunnow, was held, in England, to have caused it. "And indirectly he did so; for, had he told our Government the plain truth the Emperor Nicholas would, to say the least of it, have acted more prudently, and in all probability a rupture would have been averted." Lord Palmerston he had found charming in the rôle of English gentleman; but as minister very rude (*tout simplement grossier*).

Khreptóvich first went to London in company with Pozzo di Borgo (Russian Ambassador there in the 'thirties). Queen Victoria once paid him a great compliment, as the old gentleman told us with much complacency. He had been shooting at Drummond Castle with Lord Willoughby (? Aveland). The Queen stayed there shortly afterwards. When Khreptóvich was presented to her Majesty at Buckingham Palace, she told him that he had left a very bad reputation behind him in Scotland. "Would your Majesty graciously deign to say why?" *The Queen*, smiling, "Lord Willoughby asked his head-keeper how the Russian ambassador shot. The answer was that he had never seen him. 'Why, man, the gentleman I sent

¹ See p. 180. Lord Beaconsfield had a great liking for Schouvaloff, "Schou," as he generally calls him. Writing to Bismarck on July 13th, 1879, he says: "I can't make out about our good friend Schouvaloff, who is most popular with all of us. Will he return here? I hope so, for the sake of his society, though, for public reasons, many would be glad to see him in the first place [*i.e.* as Chancellor of the Russian Empire]." *Life*, vol. vi. p. 341, and my p. 305 note.

out with you yesterday?' 'Indeed! that the Russian ambassador! *She nicht just hae been a Hielan' poacher!*'"

Schouvaloff: "All the English ministers on my taking leave thanked me for having told the truth on both sides. At home I am accused of having prevented the Russians entering Constantinople, whereas it was I who urged it while it was reasonably safe, and afterwards merely pointed out the inevitable consequences."¹

Khreptovich: "Well, we hope soon to see you back at the interior. You must put down all this ferment—*il faut montrer les dents . . .*"

Schouvaloff: "*Il faut plus que cela ; il faut les guérir. Non ; je vais cultiver mes choux !*"

Khreptovich: "*Vous ne les mangerez pas !*" with a flattering smile.

Schouvaloff warned me that in all political matters I must be very prudent. "I have already spoken to Dufferin about you, and explained my idea of what may be done to improve relations between the two countries by having in St. Petersburg at least one thoroughly well-informed English correspondent. He professed himself delighted, saying, 'Wonderful, wonderful!' but one must not forget his habit of exaggeration"—alluding, of course, to the exquisite "blarney" which led many foreigners, and certainly Schouvaloff himself, to underestimate Lord Dufferin's real force of character.

On the 14th December Schouvaloff started very early for Varzin, and I left at 9.30 a.m. for Russia. He rejoined me at Dirschau at 5.30 p.m., after visiting Bismarck, and gave me the huge pencil the Chancellor had used. We were delayed at night for four hours at Königsberg, there being no through connection. Schouvaloff said, "I had an amusing encounter with the Jews here last year. I was passing through after getting Bismarck's consent to call the Congress. A Jewish deputation came clamouring along the platform, '*Wir wünschen den*

¹ This was fully confirmed by de Blowitz later on. See p. 300.

Schouvaloff zu sehen! Wo ist der Schouvaloff? ' Seeing me, they all cried in chorus, ' Will there be a Congress? will there be a Congress? ' When I told them I believed there would, they brought out a huge bouquet of flowers and presented it to me; *they wouldn't risk it till they had the answer they wanted!* "

As on our first journey together, in the spring, Schouvaloff donned uniform before reaching the frontier, where, again, he was received with much ceremony; but he knew well that he was, now, the most unpopular man in Russia, pointed at everywhere as one who had "betrayed his country." He accepted without a murmur the rôle of scapegoat thus wantonly assigned him, and played it with fine heroism to the end. Ever a Russian first, he loved England and the English, and his stay there undoubtedly brought about a very considerable change in his political convictions, he became much more liberal. The French, too, appealed to him in many ways; indeed, he sometimes reminded me of the French aristocrat of revolutionary times—at its best a splendid type, whatever its shortcomings. But the Republican Government shocked him, and to the end of his days he never grew reconciled to the men who composed it. He had been brought up at the Russian Court, where his father was Grand Chamberlain, in close intimacy with the Imperial family, and all his leanings and prejudices were aristocratic. He knew and felt great sympathy for Napoleon III., but had little else than contempt and mistrust for the rabble—as he considered them—who had taken his place. As to the Germans he disliked them; but his faith in Bismarck's loyalty to himself personally, and in the sincerity of his expressed desire to maintain and strengthen the old friendship between Prussia, that is—with a qualification I shall give later on—between Germany and Russia, was absolute. In this he was entirely at one with his Imperial friend and master Alexander II.; and to blame the one and not the other on this account,

supposing them to have been wrong, is the height of injustice. But of this elsewhere.¹

We reached St. Petersburg on December 16th at 11 a.m. I took up my quarters at the Hotel d'Angleterre, and from that day, almost, became involved in questions of internal and external policy of absorbing interest. But before embarking on the record of my ten years' life and work as correspondent of the *Standard* in Russia, I must sketch very briefly the world in which I found myself, the social environment that made life so agreeable to me, and some few of the actors in the tragedy-comedy of diplomacy and politics carried on before my eyes which it was my business to follow and record in so far as knowledge and ability might serve me.

To begin with the Russians. Schouvaloff set to work in earnest and without loss of time to make good his promise to Mudford. I had access to him in his own house, at first on the Fontanka, later at the corner of the Milliønnaya and the Winter Canal, day and night at any hour; but, as a rule, called upon him before he settled down for his cherished "forty winks"—or rather forty good minutes sleep, in bed, before dressing for dinner. That once secured, he would sit up till the small hours of the morning, if necessary, charming everyone by his noble presence, ready wit, inexhaustible store of anecdote, and that genuine kindness and grace of manner which even his enemies found it difficult to resist. For the term *faux-bonhomme*, applied to him by certain disappointed journalists and smaller diplomatists, was an entire misnomer, drawn from them by their chagrin on finding that his geniality, which was part of his very being, covered but thinly an intelligence proof against their feeble attempts at cajolery and deception. He introduced me to his friend Admiral Greig, Minister of Finance, an amiable man whose grandfather, a Scot, had borne a chief part in the battle of Chesmë (1770), setting fire

¹ See the passages already quoted, p. xv.

to the Turkish ships in the harbour ; to Count Valúyeff, Minister of Domains, soon after President of the Council of Ministers ; M. Pólovtsseff, Secretary of State ; General Astashóff, whose wealth, derived from Siberian gold-mines, and the good sport it enabled him to show, gained him a quasi-tolerance in aristocratic circles ; to other persons occupying high stations in official life, and to the members of his own family circle—Schouváloffs, Bóbrinskys, Bariátinskys,¹ Stackelbergs, etc.—the *crème de la crème* of Russian society. Of all these it was his brother Paul, then commanding the troops in Moscow, afterwards commander of the Imperial Russian Guard in St. Petersburg, and finally Russian ambassador in Berlin, he loved the best ; a dear, good fellow, with less ability but even more *bonhomie*, than Peter himself.

In the Turkish war, as Peter told me, at the important battle of Gorny Dubniak, which enabled the Russians to complete the investment of Plevna, when more than one assault on the Turkish central position had failed with very heavy losses, and the troops, even the Guards, beaten and hungry—the supply column being still far away—were so out of heart that it was doubted if any further effort could be got from them that day, Paul had all the non-commissioned officers of his Guard regiments called to the front, and what food there was—it was only boiled rice—distributed among them. While they fed he nodded to the starving rank and file, licking his lips, his eyes twinkling, as much as to say, "Isn't it good, just !" then, riding down the front, he called out, still smiling, "Children (*rebyáta*) ! When the non-coms' tummies are full so are ours ! Now we'll give the Turks what for ! Forrard ! mar-r-rch ! Hurrah !"

¹ The *Bóbrinskys* derive from Alexis Bóbrinsky, natural son of Catherine the Great by Prince Gregory Orloff. The *Bariátinskys* are amongst the most illustrious of the descendants of Rurik through St. Michael, Prince of Chernígoft, martyred by the Mongols in 1247. One of Schouváloff's stepdaughters (Nellie) became Princess Bariátinsky and a great lady at the Court.

The men laughed and cheered, rushed to the assault, and in a few minutes the position was won. For this he got the St. George of the 3rd Class (the 1st being reserved almost exclusively for Royalty!), the white enamel cross of which he wore round his neck. But he was not only brave and humorous. Once, after a day's shooting at Vartemiaki, his estate twenty miles by road from St. Petersburg, when the other guests were leaving he persuaded me to remain for the night, saying that we would shoot again next day and get to town in the evening, "which will be soon enough for you, Iván Ivánovich!" Peter added his persuasions, promising to let me have any news there might be on arrival, and I, nothing loth, gave in. We sat late and my host, who was a little too fond of his wine, went to bed a good deal fuddled. About five a.m. I awoke astonished to see him standing by my bedside. "I'm sorry, Iván Ivánovich; you must forgive me, but I forgot something yesterday. I have to lecture at the Staff College this morning, at 9.30, on Suvóroff's tactics at the battle of the Rymnik, and I haven't even read it up! I've ordered coffee—you can breakfast in town—and the horses will be here in ten minutes, so hurry up. We'll come back another day." We drove to St. Petersburg accordingly, and I heard afterwards that the lecture was quite a success!

Schouváloff introduced me, also, to Arthur Raffalóvich, who had been his private secretary at the Berlin Congress, and begged that brilliant but lazy young publicist to help me in any way he could. Raffalóvich wrote for the *Journal des Débats* and the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, and a cleverer pen hardly existed in Europe. He was afterwards for many years financial agent for the Russian Government in Paris. He supplied me once with a neat reply to a somewhat rough note I had received from the chief of the Russian Telegraph Service, viz.: "*Monsieur, Votre lettre d'hier aurait pu être moins courtoise et plus polie. Agréez, etc.*" My relations with the department in

question, which had been somewhat strained, improved from that moment.¹

I had introductions from home to Lord Dufferin, from a distant connection of my own, Sir William Fraser, an original member of Lord Dufferin's famous Pythic Club at Oxford; and to von Stumm, Councillor of the German Embassy, who had a charming American wife, from Baron Emile d'Erlanger. At her house I met Count Kalnoky, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, afterwards Minister for Foreign Affairs, and began those pleasant relations with the representatives of the Dual Monarchy in St. Petersburg which continued uninterruptedly during many years—with Count Wolkenstein, Baron Aehrenthal—also, in turn, Minister for Foreign Affairs, who by his annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina did more than anyone else to bring about the Great War; with Dr. Constantine Dumba, Count Esterhazy, Count Sczechen, and others, names, some of them, now of sinister repute; but, while I have not a word to say in defence of Austrian policy or conduct to weaker States, I cannot refrain from emphasising the marked difference between the Austrians themselves, those I met, at least, and their German colleagues. In all my experience there was never any real cordiality between the English and the Germans, with the solitary exception, in my own case, of Count Alexander Münster, whose father had been German Ambassador in London, and who would have passed anywhere as an Englishman. With the Austrian Embassy, on the other hand, our own representatives and I myself were invariably on friendly terms; and I believe it to be a fact, though it is only of St. Petersburg that I can speak from personal observation that, with the possible exception

¹ M. Hanotaux's article on the Berlin Congress in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Sept. 1908, is based partly on an unpublished account of the proceedings (*Souvenirs inédits*), written by Schouvaloff and communicated by Raffalóvich.

of the Dutch and Scandinavians, the official British got on better with the Austrians than with men of any other nationality, and with the Austrians may be coupled the Hungarians.

I am not, of course, discussing the Americans. It is difficult—for me impossible—to look upon them as foreigners. During the period I am writing of, American ministers, secretaries and attachés, naval and military, followed one another in rather rapid succession—men, some of them, of distinction; men and women, often, of great charm and full of human kindness—Lothrop, Tafts, Hitchcocks, Andrew White, Emery Smith, Captain Buckingham, U.S.N., and others, besides the American ladies married to foreign diplomatists of whom there were at one time as many as half-a-dozen in the Russian capital. Last but not least there was Wurts, the chief secretary, who for years managed to keep his post, whoever else might come and go, through all changes of administration at home or of its titular representatives abroad. Wurts' handsome apartment on the Palace Quay was noted for pleasant hospitality—luncheons, teas, but above all dinners and whist-parties. His faults were very patent, but his kindness was shown to me in many ways, and never failed in all those years. My circle of acquaintance soon embraced the whole diplomatic corps which formed a society in itself; for the Russian aristocrats rarely admitted to their houses, save on the occasion of ceremonious receptions and balls, the official foreigner, however exalted his position, unless he had the greater recommendation, in their eyes, of high birth combined with social talents. On the other hand, it was beneath the dignity of the said foreigner to have relations with the non-aristocratic elements. This was where the mere correspondent, such as I, with good introductions, scored heavily. It was my duty—and my pleasure—to know people of all sorts, ranks and classes; that was an understood thing, and I could now hob-nob even with medical

students without running the risk of having aristocratic doors shut in my face as in Moscow.

I have mentioned Colonel Leopold Swaine ; and others of our military attachés will make brief appearances in these pages. Their naval colleagues were mostly men of note, who afterwards attained high rank in their profession, and with one and all I was lucky enough to be on more or less intimate terms. Amongst them I may mention here Captain (now Admiral Sir Lewis) Beaumont, with whom, lately, I sat on the Council of the Royal Geographical Society ; and Captain (now Admiral of the Fleet, Sir William) May, whose extremely youthful appearance when he came to Kronstadt in command of the *Osborne*, coupled with the nature of that vessel, so misled the Russians that they took him quite carelessly over forts, ships, and mining defences, to be horrified next day on making the discovery that he had recently been in command of the "mystery ship" *Polyphemus* ! During 1891-3 Captain May came back to St. Petersburg from time to time as naval attaché.¹ Captain Kane—*Hurricane*—who took the *Calliope* out of Apia Bay² I first met on the tower of the English church at Kronstadt, where at the invitation of the jovial parson Riddle, a modern Friar Tuck in appearance, some of us had assembled to watch the Russian fleet manœuvring. Presently Kane asked, "Why doesn't that ship join?" pointing to a certain vessel. We had not yet been introduced, but I happened to be next him, and I answered, "She will before long ; she's riding at short stay." He turned to me with interest, but my moustachios settled it. I was evidently *not* a sailor. Then Riddle introduced us, and we soon became good friends. There was a fairly large garden attached to the parsonage, but it

¹ The naval attachés in Europe were appointed to the greater Courts in general, not to any one particular Court.

² See Stevenson's description in *Eight Years of Samoa*, Works, Pentland Edition, vol. xvi. p. 162.

grew only one flower—characteristically enough—for Riddle was a lover of good cheer, and the flower was borage, wherewith to flavour the delectable hock or claret cups, with which he regaled us on this and other occasions. Then there were Captain (now Admiral L. E.) Wintz, whose modesty almost concealed from us the fact that he had won the Stanhope medal,¹ and others. Sir Berkeley Milne, who came out once in command of the *Osborne*, had been with me at Wellington College, as a very small boy ; perhaps the only instance of a Wellington boy entering the navy. Captain Calthorpe, another naval attaché (now Admiral Sir Somerset Gough-Calthorpe), as he reminded me, had been desperately in love with a sister of mine when she was aged ten and he barely six !

Attached, so to say, to the British Embassy were the Queen's Messengers, whose badge was the Silver Greyhound. I took lunch with one of them, Conway Seymour, who had been quartered with my father in Dublin in the 'forties, on the day of my arrival ; and during the ten years that I remained in Russia as correspondent (and long afterwards) he and his colleagues, especially Harry Taylor, son of the once-famous author of *Philip van Artevelde*, did me many a friendly service. In turn, they more often than not spent at least one evening of their regulation four days' stay with me, dining, and as a rule playing whist. Good fellows, most of them ; but with an incorrigible love of grumbling, Seymour's particular grievance being that people no longer gambled, as in the time of Lord Augustus Loftus, when he " never left St. Petersburg without having won several pounds." However, there was no help for it. In diplomatic circles only whist was played now—how ante-diluvian it sounds

¹ This characteristic modesty on the part of the recipients added to the fact that the medal is bestowed but once a year—for the bravest life-saving deed—accounts for its being little known to the public in general.

—the stakes were always low, nor were any of us in the least inclined to raise them for Seymour's benefit !

Another grievance came later when some too-zealous understrapper at the Treasury discovered that the Queen's Messengers' expenses in Russia were being repaid them at the rate of three shillings and fourpence the rouble, as after the Crimean war, instead of at about two shillings, the actual rate of exchange ! Another messenger, Captain the Hon. Hugh Hare, a very small man physically, distinguished himself by breaking the backs of my chairs (by a sudden very violent movement) with strict impartiality when either he or his partner revoked ! The late Captain Philip Wynter has left us a pleasant gossip book entitled *On the Queen's Errands*,¹ but his grumbling was so inveterate that the first line of Richard III. would come involuntarily to mind, and I named him "discontent." Yet another, Major Lumley, who had served in the British, German and Austrian armies successively, and had been through, I fancy, the hell-fire of Mars-la-Tour or Gravelotte, made a business of *bric-à-brac* dealing, for which his calling gave rare opportunities. He made a *coup* now and then, as when he secured in St. Petersburg the second and third volumes of Monstrelet's chronicle printed on vellum for, I think, £150, and sold them to the British Museum for £400. The Museum had the first and second volumes on vellum, but Lumley's copy was so much finer that they bought both of his. At one time he came to grief, financially ; and, while sorry for him, one could not help smiling at the report that his examination in bankruptcy revealed as total assets *one sarcophagus* ! It was, indeed, a very fine one, found in Turkey, and said to be Greek of the best period. What became of it I do not know.

In devoting his spare time to hunting for old pictures and books and china Lumley was only following in the steps of Major Byng Hall, who was still in the Q.M.

¹ London, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1906.

service when I first came to Russia and has left a chatty little book on his favourite pursuit,¹ and another on his personal adventures.²

The third society with which I had intimate relations was the British colony, of which the chronicle has yet to be written. Dating almost from the days of Willoughby and Chancellor—though not, of course, in St. Petersburg—it had passed through many vicissitudes to reach at the time of my arrival in Russia a stage that as far as regarded social amenity left really nothing to be desired. There were very few old people, the great majority of the leaders of the community being, by chance, young married couples, nearly all in receipt of good incomes and possessed of spacious apartments in St. Petersburg and pleasant country quarters at Lígovo, Mourino, or elsewhere—with tennis lawns—where they spent the summer months and where they delighted to entertain their friends. There were pretty girls about, too, and altogether a more pleasant society, for a young man, it would have been difficult to find anywhere.

Moreover, there were clubs of all sorts connected with the colony—famous clubs, some of them—for shooting, fishing, cricket and lawn-tennis, ice-hilling, skating; and I myself with three others founded, a little later, the Yukki *ski*-ing club, the first of its kind outside Scandinavia, and the first English *ski*-ing club in the world. The Goriélovo Hunt, in which Russian aristocrats such as Vorontsóff-Dashkoff³ rode side by side with the British colonists, had just come to an end, the last master being Evelyn Hubbard.

Finally, there were miscellaneous friends and acquaintances belonging to none of these circles, the most notable amongst them being John Hughes; and, in a category apart, my own colleagues.

¹ *Adventures of a Bric-à-brac Hunter*, 1868.

² *The Queen's Messenger*, etc., 1865.

³ Viceroy of the Caucasus when the war began—now dead.

John Hughes began life as a pit-boy in a Welsh coal-mine, and ended a long and honourable career with the unique distinction of being the eponymous founder of one of the most important industrial towns in Russia—*Yousovka* (Hughesovka), the seat of the New Russia Company's great steel and iron works, started and made famous and successful by him. He was first invited to Russia by the Grand Duke Constantine, brother of Alexander II., head of the Russian navy, who had come to know him when already in a position of some importance at the Thames Iron Works. Hughes claimed to have invented armour-plating, and was certainly the first to apply it in Russia—to some of the forts at Kronstadt. At the time I write of, business with the Russian Government kept him for weeks at a time in St. Petersburg, where he lived, as I did, in the Hotel d'Angleterre. Though he was old and I young we became fast friends, very much to my advantage, for he was one of the shrewdest, kindest men I ever met. The strange fact about him was that to the day of his death he could not write; and could only read print with difficulty, script not at all. It is curious indeed to speculate on what such a man lost by this disability. Loss, naturally, there must have been; but I feel very sure that there was gain as well, and perhaps counterbalancing gain. He had no book-learning at all, but he read men, understood them, ruled them. He disdained, perhaps overmuch, the technical training of the Russian Government engineers sent to assist him, and loved to describe their amazement at the results he attained in steel-making by rule of thumb and eye alone—watching the colours of the molten mass and seizing the exact moment to withdraw it from the furnace—an accomplishment their text-books and college training had failed to impart. With me his favourite topic was the Celtic race as a race of black-smiths and especially of sword-smiths. He believed that they could be traced in all their migrations by their

working in iron and steel, and snatched eagerly and intelligently at such information as I could give him about the Cimmerians, Chalybes and others. Above all he loved to hear of such things as Othello's sword, "of the ice-brook's temper," and to tell—I don't know where he got it from—of a sword-smith—Celtic, of course—who would snatch a blade from his Catalan forge, leap on a bare-backed steed and go clattering up the mountain side waving the white-hot steel in the frosty air, to get a temper on it keen as that of Excalibur or Balmung.

One of Hughes' chief difficulties in the early days of Hughesovka was the number of Church festivals and fasts which, when added to the secular holidays, such as the Tsar's birthday and others, plus the fifty-two Sundays, made up a total that left a quite inadequate number of working days for an output that should pay. But the Welshman was not to be beaten by a trifle like that. He cultivated assiduously the friendship of the local "pope," and one day after an abundant dinner put the matter before him, with a direct appeal *ad hominem*, or, rather, to his pocket. He explained that for the success of the new enterprise, so vital to the State, so advantageous to the people, it was absolutely necessary to increase the number of working days. Unfortunately, this could only be done by docking the Orthodox hierarchy in Heaven of some of their rights on earth. But, after all, there were saints and Saints—could one, for instance, venture to compare saint Prokófii or saint Merkúrii of Smolensk, admirable as their lives were, with St. Nicholas of Bari or St. George of Cappadocia? No, he thought not! Well, would it not be possible to weed out a few of the less important names, on condition that, by way of compensation, the Orthodox Church, in the person of his reverence, benefited to the extent of so much per *pood* on all the extra metal, iron or steel, turned out as a result of this concession? The proposal was favourably met. The Calendar was sent

for, and Welsh ex-miner and Orthodox priest went carefully through it, retaining all names of importance, striking out those of least significance, till in the end John Hughes had gained 10 or 15 per cent. of working days in the year, while his very sensible interlocutor had in prospect a substantial addition to his income—whether for himself or his flock was left for conscience to determine. Anyone with a particle of imagination—and my readers have, naturally, each many such particles—can easily conjure up the genial spectacle of this unique conference.

There is a charming legend, by the way, about Prokófii, mentioned above, that he would kneel all night, or by day when mists obscured the high-banked Northern Dvina and made navigation dangerous, praying “for the unseen voyagers,” whoever they might be, passing below him. It is related also that by his prayers he averted a shower of stones from Heaven and saved from destruction Ustyúg Velíki, in proof of which great aerolites can be seen to this day in the fields at some distance from that town. To Merkúrii of Smolensk it was graciously intimated in a dream that if he rode against the enemy then invading his country he would achieve glory by having his head smitten off, a happy chance he failed not to profit by.

Coming, now, to my colleagues, the *Daily News* was efficiently served by a correspondent whose chief fault—in my opinion—was too great reliance on the *Gólos*, the liberal journal which, like the Flying Dutchman's gallant ship, battered and strained by the squalls and hurricanes of police attack and ministerial hammerings—its owner, captain and crew living in perpetual fear of being swamped and driven under once for all by some fiercer gust of despotism—strove desperately, but ever in vain, to round the grim and icy Horn of arbitrary power. The sympathy of the *Daily News* was naturally with the *Gólos*, which flew, while it could, the banner of Constitutional

Freedom ; and, in turn, the English liberal organ's anti-jingo line in foreign and especially Russian affairs helped to make such sympathy reciprocal. But in supplying my colleague with news and opinions the *Gólos* was not always free from suspicion of using his ready pen for its own purposes—let us hope without his knowledge or intent.

The correspondent of the *Times* during the whole ten years of my service on behalf of the *Standard* in Russia was George Dobson, with whom, in spite of keen competition and occasional differences of opinion on professional matters, I rejoice to think I was ever on terms of friendship. We were, naturally, thrown together on numberless occasions, and above all when, for instance, a Coronation took us both to Moscow, or an Imperial Progress to the frosty—and fiery—Caucasus. We were arrested together in St. Petersburg, and again in Baku, as Nihilists ; and it was with feelings of inexpressible relief that I learned a year or so ago of Dobson's release from imprisonment by the Bolsheviks in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. He had served the *Times* in those old days—how faithfully and well perhaps none know better than I—for no less a period than twenty-seven years. It was more than pleasant after a very long interval to see his letters once more in the columns of that great newspaper, and to read not only the story of his perils and escape, written with all his former force and clarity, but also of a summons to Buckingham Palace, to recount his adventures to the King.

Officially that was all—*Times*, *Daily News*, *Standard* ; no other London "daily" had a recognised correspondent in Russia. We were three in the race for news : yet a shadowy fourth rode close at our heels when not, indeed, alongside ; nor was I long in doubt as to the ghostly rider's identity.

One night early in the new year (1880) I was taken for the first time to the Yusúpoff Gardens, a skating rink

at that time frequented by the British colony. My companion presently pointed to a man in a close-fitting brown suit, tight buttoned, with small black-astrakhan cap, kepi-shaped, set well back on his head, and both hands, or fists, thrust deep into his jacket pockets, who was skating round with little grace but abundant mastery. Of medium height and well-knit figure his face missed being fairly good-looking by reason only of the long Irish upper lip, furnished with close-cut bristly mustachios. But what struck me most, what could not fail to strike anyone, was the absolute self-reliance and concentrated energy that pervaded not only the face but the whole body and being of the man—an energy so vital, so aggressive, as to suggest not merely antagonism but actual hostility. Striking off vigorously on alternate outside edges, he seemed to owe even the ice a grudge, and to be bent on punishing it. "You see him?" whispered my companion, mysteriously. I looked well at him: "Yes, who is he?" "Promise me faithfully not to mention it to anyone." "Certainly." "Well, that is Law, Edward FitzGerald Law; he is employed by the Hubbards in their warehouse." "Well, that does not sound very exciting." "No," sinking his voice still lower, "*but he is the correspondent of the 'Daily Telegraph'!*" "Oh, indeed!" My curiosity was roused. This then was the mysterious colleague who wrote audacious diatribes against Russia and had, so far, defied detection! It was my first view of a man destined to become one of my best friends, and the impression made was by no means a favourable one. Nor was it much bettered when, a day or two later, we met at the Embassy, where, as a cousin in some degree of Lady Dufferin, Law had a recognised position or, at least, an entry.

It took me a long time, indeed, thoroughly to appreciate his great qualities, though we soon became friends of a sort; the fact being that his brusque, determined manner antagonised me as it did many others, including,

even, pretty girls he was anxious to conciliate, though some there were, less sensitive or with quicker penetration, who saw his worth from the first. Eventually he married a Greek lady, of whom he was wont to say, "My wife thinks herself the most beautiful woman in the world—luckily so do I!"

Hampered by difficulties and troubles that would have daunted and perhaps broken other men, Law forced his way to the front and made a successful and even brilliant career, the details of which may be read in his biography,¹ his most characteristic feat being the creation of a post under Government—that of commercial attaché to Russia, Turkey and Persia—filled by him with marked ability. When, however, he first returned to St. Petersburg in this capacity, Sir Robert Morier, the new ambassador, was furious. He was a man of great parts and commanding presence, who habitually expressed his very decided views in unmeasured language. He now called the Nether Regions to witness that he neither wanted Law's services nor would have them. But at their very first meeting he discovered to his astonishment that here was a man after his own heart, a man with talents, knowledge and energy more than enough to outbalance those of the whole British consular staff in the Russian Empire taken together; and from that moment he became one of Law's staunchest supporters.

Meantime, backed by General Sir Henry Brackenbury, a life-long friend, Law, who had for a short time held a commission in the R.A., re-entered the army to serve in the Suakin Expedition of 1885, and won a brevet majority. His services to Greece are well known; his name is cherished and honoured there, a street in Athens being named after him; and but for disabling illness, ending with premature death, he would, doubtless, have attained even greater positions than the last he held—that of

¹ *The Life of Sir Edward FitzGerald Law*, Edinburgh and London, 1911.

financial member of the Viceroy's council—and higher honours than the K.C.S.I. and K.C.M.G. he actually won.

But what drew you and held you to Law, when once you got to know him, was neither his ability nor his masterful energy, but the fact that he possessed in high degree the three great human qualities—honesty, loving-kindness, courage.

I first met Dr. E. J. Dillon at the house of the Rev. Mr. Cremer, chaplain to the British Embassy—that being the official title of the Church of England incumbent in the Russian capital—and struck up a friendship with him that has lasted ever since. He was then preparing to undergo his examination for the degree of Doctor in Comparative Philology at the university of St. Petersburg, having already taken degrees at Louvain and Halle; and, for the first time, I became aware of what the word linguist might mean and how vast a gulf is fixed between those to whom the term is commonly applied and such an one as Dillon. To learn Russian is still thought to be somewhat of a feat. Dillon had not learnt it, that is to say he had made no effort to do so, but had merely acquired it in the course of more difficult studies because it happened to be the necessary medium. Yet the old Grand-duke Michael, out shooting one day, asked me, "Do you know a countryman of yours named Dillon?" "Yes, sir." "Is he really an Englishman?" "Not exactly: he is an Irishman." "Well, he has written me a letter of several pages in such perfect Russian that I hardly know who could have written it as well. He must be a remarkable man." Later, Dillon, having passed his examinations, joined the professorial staff at Kharkoff University, where he made a sensation and some enemies by routing, publicly, an old humbug of a professor who pretended to know Armenian. It was a Pyrrhic victory, and his next essay was as editor of an Odessa paper, in which he wrote the daily leaders, of course in Russian. Coming back to St. Petersburg

somewhat later he, at my suggestion, applied to the *Daily Telegraph* for the vacant post of correspondent, L  w having left it, and Dillon's subsequent connection with that paper is matter of common knowledge. Some few years ago I reproached him for having abandoned literature for journalism. "I like that! Why, it was you who persuaded me to become a newspaper man!" "True, but I never thought you would make a career of it."

Such a career, however, needs no justification. It is beyond contradiction that no journalist, not even de Blowitz, has ever approached Dillon in the domain of foreign affairs, either in extent, variety, or depth of knowledge. His acquaintance with men, from Popes, crowned heads, statesmen and ambassadors downwards, is equally unrivalled. Venizelos was one of his discoveries. Count Witte had no secrets from him. In earlier days he did devote some time to purely literary work, as witnessed by his translation of the Book of Job from the original Hebrew, with striking elucidations. I have seen, too, philological articles of his and pamphlets in various European languages, all or nearly all of which he can write, as well as speak, perfectly, besides being master of several Eastern tongues.

In the days, however, when first we met, he was absorbed in his studies, sitting up night after night with a wet towel round his head and a snuff-box beside him—for there was nothing, he found, like a pinch of rappee to clear an over-taxed brain. He found time, nevertheless, to spend an hour or two, now and then, in congenial company, and, being Irish and possessed of wit as well as humour, he would enter with great zest into any fun there might be on foot, or, indeed, initiate it himself. He and I still laugh when we recall how I dressed him up as a venerable-looking Afghan pundit "Bungaloochim-watty-peg" from Kandahar, in which character he completely deceived not only many friends and acquaint-

ances but the very professor—Patkánoff—who was coaching him in Armenian at the University and with whom he lodged. Invitations were already being sent out to the chief orientalists of St. Petersburg to meet the distinguished traveller at a banquet when Dillon, seeing that the joke had gone far enough, made his confession, and—not without trouble—his peace.

CHAPTER III

Internal condition of Russia—Nihilism—Foreign affairs—The Central Asian question—Russia and China—Abdur-rahman—The Tekke Campaign—Skóbeleff, an interview—A police raid—Captured as Nihilist—Winter Palace explosion—The Tsar and Providence—Mélikoff's appointment—Extraordinary powers—Vera Zasúlich—Russo-German relations—German Jews as English correspondents—Kaiser and Tsar—Russia and France—An unfriendly act—Twenty-five years' reign—Attempt to kill Mélikoff—Gladstone's return to power—Lord Radstock's Russian followers.

WHEN the editor of the *Standard* spoke of news from Russia he was thinking, doubtless, in the first place, of the internal condition of the country. The Emperor's life had been attempted more than once of late, and the spectre of Nihilism loomed larger and more ominous day by day. There was ample presage of the catastrophe to come; what the result might be in Russia no one knew, but it was commonly recognised by now that whatever deeply affected the internal condition of even this Ishmael amongst European States must inevitably exert an influence great or small on the fortunes of all the rest, so that interest and even anxiety grew keen. In any case the *Standard*, though not a "yellow" paper in the worst sense of the term—for it had some slight regard for veracity—was quite determined to be well to the front with any news at once sensational and true. It judged, moreover, accurately, that for the moment nothing gave such promise of startling results as the growing activity of the Russian revolutionary party, and

that was one reason why Mudford engaged my services so readily.

As to foreign affairs there was a lull in the storm, due to the exhaustion of Russia and Turkey, the temporary satisfaction of Austria, the complacency with which England regarded her share in the Berlin Treaty and separate arrangement with the Porte, and Germany's knowledge, after the rebuff of 1875, that she must bide her time.¹ France, still in the throes of her Republican third-birth, fearful of her neighbour, and distrusted by the Court of St. Petersburg, owing to the ultra-radical elements in her governing classes, hardly counted.

But in this field, too, of international relations, troubles were brewing, troubles manifold. First and foremost came the Central Asian question. Indian troops had been brought to Malta by Lord Beaconsfield in 1878, a theatrical *coup* avowedly aimed at Russia. That power was now grimly determined to achieve such a position in Asia that, in future, whenever any question arose threatening hostilities between England and herself, Sikh, Pathan and Gurkha would be wanted at home to defend the Indian frontier. As Lord Roberts tells us baldly, "Russia answered this move on our part by increased activity in Central Asia." She was already tasting the sweets of revenge, for Stoliétoff's mission to Kabul in 1878 had brought about the Afghan war then waging.² Meantime (September 9th, 1879) the Russians under Lomákin had suffered a grievous defeat at the hands of the Tekke Turkomans, at Denghel Tepě, close to Geok Tepě;³ a punitive expedition had been resolved on, with Geok Tepě, or possibly Merv, as its objective; and

¹ It is known that in 1875 Germany, alarmed at France's rapid recovery from her recent disasters, contemplated a renewed attack, which was only frustrated by the intervention of Queen Victoria and Alexander II.

² See p. 132.

³ See Marvin's *The Eye-witnesses' account of the Disastrous Russian Campaign*, etc., London, W. H. Allen & Co., 1880.

this would undoubtedly bring Russian troops within striking distance of the Afghan border, if not up to it. The situation thus preparing was fraught in any case with difficulty and danger: the mingled ignorance and folly of Great Britain's policy was to bring her diplomatic defeat and national humiliation as the only alternative to the risks and the losses of an European war.

With China Russia's relations were strained owing to the difference that had arisen as to the restitution of Kuldja, or Ili, the border province taken over by Russia, temporarily, as a result of the Muhammedan (Dungan and Taranchi) rebellion against China and the not unreasonable fear lest the province should fall into the hands of Yakoub Beg of Kashgar. Chung-how, the Chinese Special Envoy, had been cajoled into signing the Treaty of Livadia, by which a portion of the territory including the Muzart Pass was ceded to Russia, giving her, strategically, command of the whole province. It was rumoured—correctly—that the Court of Peking would refuse to ratify the Treaty, even at the risk of war with Russia. Chung-how lay under sentence of death.

Evidently an English correspondent in Russia was likely to find his position no sinecure.

My first few days in St. Petersburg, as correspondent of the *Standard*, were the last days of 1879. I spent them in looking about me, in making many acquaintances, and in reading feverishly the Russian newspapers—less in the hope of finding news than in the fear of missing it. I dined at the Embassy on Christmas Day; attended, by Lord Dufferin's own invitation, the brilliant reception there on December 30th, mentioned in his biography,¹ and sent a few unimportant telegrams. Then, on the first day of the new year, my service may be said to have commenced with a despatch announcing the

¹ *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, by Sir Alfred Lyall, P.C., 2 vols., John Murray, 1905, vol. i. p. 308.

so-called "flight" of the Sirdar Abdur-rahman from Russian territory across the border of Afghan Turkestan.

A grandson of Dost Mohammed, Abdur-rahman had taken refuge with the Russians in 1868 after brilliant victories gained by him over Shere Ali, afterwards Ameer, which gave him, for a time, possession of the Afghan throne, but subsequent defeat at the hands of his own cousin Yakoub Khan. Well received by the all-powerful Governor-General, Kaufmann, he had lived ever since at Samarcand in receipt of a pension of Rs. 25,000 granted him by the Russian Government, of which Schuyler, from personal observation, declared that he spent not more than one-fifth.¹ He had recently been allowed to visit Tashkent in order to greet General Kaufmann on his return from European Russia; and thence, it appeared, with the latter's permission he had journeyed to Ferghana, on the pretence of a visit to certain relatives. There was in reality no flight. The Afghan pretender first sent one wife with her children to her father, the ruler of Badakshan, then followed on himself at the propitious moment, undoubtedly with the approval and in all probability at the direct instigation of his Russian protector, who hoped by this move to embarrass the Indian Government and bring defeat, perhaps disaster, on the British army of occupation in Kabul. In the event, Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, turned the tables rather neatly on his opponent. Shere Ali had fled from Kabul in Nov. 1878, when the British forced the Khyber, renouncing the sovereignty of Afghanistan in favour of his son Yakoub, hitherto kept prisoner by him. He had died soon after (Feb. 1879) at Mazar-i-Sherif, and Yakoub's subsequent complicity in the Cavagnari massacre, or culpable negligence at least, led to his deposition by us and deportation to India. The question was who should succeed him; and while General

¹ *Turkistan*, by Eugene Schuyler, 4th edition, London, 1876, vol. i. p. 260.

Roberts favoured a partition of Afghanistan between the various claimants, Lord Lytton was convinced that the best solution lay in finding, if possible, a candidate strong enough to establish his rule firmly over the whole country. Now, the only human being at all likely to fulfil this requirement was Abdur-rahman. When therefore, towards the end of March, it became known that he had obtained complete mastery in Afghan Turkestan, the Indian Government, through Sir Lepel Griffin, opened negotiations with him which resulted in his being formally installed Ameer in Kabul, by Sir Donald Stewart, on the 10th August, 1880. Next day Roberts set out on the famous march to Kandahar, while Stewart began his retirement with the remaining British forces to India. Abdur-rahman soon realised that his best interests lay in keeping faith with those who had put him on the throne and were prepared to maintain him there, rather than with his quondam friends, the Russians, who had so egregiously failed Shere Ali. His relations with them became cold and eventually, for a time, hostile.

Intimately connected with the Afghan question was that of Central Asia. The Russians had in any case to avenge Lomákin's defeat and make good their position beyond the Caspian, quite apart from the larger problem of the threat to India and ultimate settlement of the Eastern question itself in accordance with Russian ideas—for, as Skóbeleff said, unless that were finally achieved "the Central Asian fleece was not worth the tanning."

The campaign was already in preparation when I reached St. Petersburg, and it was pretty well known that Skóbeleff was to be in command, but no appointment had actually been made. The general opinion both in Russia and abroad pointed to Merv as the objective, but in telegraphing to the *Standard* on January 20th I gave good reasons against this view.

Russia, indeed, in respect to this affair, was in a situation of much embarrassment. An official report of the

Denghel Tepě disaster had been published,¹ to prepare public opinion abroad for a renewal of the expedition in the spring upon a more extended scale with Merv as objective. But the march of events in Afghanistan had caused a change in the situation and in the value of Merv now that the capture of that stronghold would apparently bring the English to Herat. It was necessary to punish the Tekkes, but the campaign might be arranged to include or exclude Merv according to circumstances, one column advancing from the Caspian Sea along the Persian frontier, another marching southward from Charjui, on the Oxus, the intention being to crush the Turkomans between them. Their escape northward would be impossible, even if no third body started from Khiva.

In the end the Russians did content themselves with the storming and capture of Geok Tepě—the Merv Turkomans made voluntary submission later on—but the press of Europe continued to talk of the Merv expedition, the Merv campaign, etc., to the last.

On the 12th February the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* published a very violent article against England, based on a rumour that we were about to release Persia from her treaty obligation not to occupy Herat. The Russian Foreign Office, when Lord Dufferin, as he told me, drew its attention to this sally, threw the blame on the editor who, it declared, had been promptly reprimanded. Next day I called on Skóbeleff to ask permission to accompany him as war-correspondent.

I found the famous "White General" ² busily engaged on the plans for the coming expedition with Colonel

¹ November, 1879, a very incomplete and partial account. Marvin gives a full translation of it, *op. cit.* p. 365.

² Skóbeleff was so called because he invariably rode a white horse in battle and wore a white uniform, his object being to make himself as conspicuous as possible. Even in those days it might seem a very foolish proceeding, but he believed in his star and it helped to make him the idol not only of the soldiery but of all Russia.

Grodékoff, his chief of the staff. He received me kindly, but said at once that the Emperor had given explicit orders that no correspondents should be allowed, not even of Russian papers; there was no prospect whatever of this decision being reversed. "Personally I regret to disappoint you, for, as you know, the English correspondents and I have been very good friends in the past. I did what I could to help them, and they in turn were largely responsible for the rapid way in which my name became known all over the world." Skóbeleff, like other Russian generals I had spoken to, professed to attach little importance to Merv, the value of which he thought greatly exaggerated by English writers. Situated as it was he did not believe in the possibility of constituting it a base for operations against Herat. "For a battalion it might serve; but not for an army," and he appealed for confirmation of this view to Grodékoff, who had recently (November, 1878) made a daring ride through Afghan Turkestan to Herat, and in his report had stated in so many words *Merv is not the key of Herat, and to conduct an expeditionary force of any strength along that route would be an impossibility*, the italics being his own.¹

It seems that Skóbeleff had altered his opinion on this subject, probably in deference to Grodékoff's views, for in a letter he had written to a Russian diplomatist abroad as far back as in 1879, but first published in Aksákoff's *Rus*, in March, 1883, and in the *Standard* (my translation) on the 20th of that month he had urged the necessity of getting possession of Merv and making it "a point whence we could (a) sever the independent Khanates from Afghanistan (under British influence), by the exertion of material force and moral influence; and (b) secure Herat from sudden seizure—Herat the "key of India," as the English call it, whose possession would bring with it inevitably a complete predominance of

¹ See Marvin, *Grodékoff's Ride to Herat*, 2nd edition, London, 1885, p. 162.

English influence at Teheran, and—more important still—a military organisation of the Turkoman hordes.”

As to the fear of a Russian invasion of India Skóbeleff remarked that he regarded it as altogether chimerical, “as much so as an Indian advance on Orenburg.” Having in my mind the above-mentioned article in the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*—which, it is likely enough, he had not then seen—I hinted at the possibility of our setting Persia free to take Herat. He turned the subject adroitly and the interview soon afterwards came to an end. Subsequently I was amused to find in Grodékoff’s official record of the campaign a footnote referring to me by name, and giving this mention of Persia and Herat as in itself a justification of Russia’s forward move in Transcaspia !

In some of the local papers there appeared on February 1st a brief account of a police raid on a Nihilist lodging in St. Petersburg. Four conspirators were captured after a fight, two of either sex, and a third man, a Jew named Abraham, expert in explosives, blew his brains out there and then. The rooms when searched yielded rich booty—two hand printing-presses ; a quantity of pamphlets, proclamations, and falsified documents ; and a complete new issue of the revolutionary journal *Naródnaya Vólya* (“ Will of the People ”) ; also poisons, explosives, and the drill used by Hartmann in preparing the railway attempts of 1879.¹

Breakfasting that morning at the fashionable “ Bear ” restaurant with my colleague of the *Times*, the idea struck us that half an hour might profitably be spent in viewing the scene of the arrest ; so, having drunk our coffee, we donned fur-coats and goloshes, and in company with an English resident, P—— and a German friend, started in a couple of sledges for the Saperny-pereúlok (Sapper’s-lane). Arrived at the corner of the street, we dismissed

¹ See p. 67 note.

the *izvoshchiks*, and made our way to number 10, a large house with the usual courtyard and front and back entrances. Neither *schweizár* (hall-porter, Swiss) nor *dvornik* (yardman) was visible, but those of the neighbouring houses, engaged in sweeping the muddy streets, looked at us with a smile, of which we failed to appreciate the significance till it broadened to a grin on our re-appearance.

The back staircase, which we tried first, was dirty and narrow; we ascended it in single file, and had all but reached the top storey, the scene of the affray, when we received a warning not to persevere, and consequently beat a retreat; but, determined not to lose the occasion, I went to the front door and knocked. A gentleman in plain clothes opened it; I asked, in French, if we might be permitted to enter, and, receiving a reply in the affirmative, led the way upstairs. Opposite the top flight of steps was door number nine, and sure enough there were the bullet holes through it, while to the left, on a higher level, was a small window with both panes broken, the besieged having used it as a loophole. Having contemplated all this for some time, and come to the conclusion that a couple of resolute men might have kept many at bay, I rang the bell smartly. The door flew open. "May we come in?" "*Pajáluista*" (please do) was the answer, in the most courteous tones, and in I walked, my companions following closely. We heard the door locked behind us as we traversed the pitch-dark corridor. We reached the threshold of the first room, spurs and sabres clanked, there was a hurried tread of many feet, and, in a moment, we were surrounded by gendarmes. The officer—it was he who had decoyed us in—came up, asked us each in rapid succession our name and occupation, searched us for arms, and finding none, informed us that we were prisoners! P——, the only one of the party whose Russian was sufficiently voluble for the occasion, expostulated, protested, demanded to

be taken before the British Ambassador ; but in vain. There was nothing to be done, and as, after all, it gave us an excellent opportunity of fulfilling the object of our visit, I took out a cigarette, lighted it, with permission, by one our surly captor was smoking, and proceeded to scan the room, which bore unmistakable evidence of the conflict.

The most noticeable object was a portrait of the Emperor hanging on the wall ; it had escaped the bullets, and, as if in irony, was extra large in size'. The floor was strewn with furniture and scraps of paper and clothing ; the wall was pierced in several places with bullet holes, one or two of which I probed with my finger. By this time it was evident that our calm way of taking the matter was beginning to force on the police a doubt as to our being Nihilists after all. Our predicament was indeed rather an amusing one than otherwise, and I think I should have laughed outright had not sadder thoughts taken possession of me as I looked round the room and thought of the unhappy beings who had dwelt in it. In spite of their bitter warfare against society, they too were not without human sympathies and affection or love of nature. On the window sills were flower-pots, but the flowers were broken and drooping ; a woman's shawl lay on the floor ; in a corner was a covered mass, it might be the corpse of the suicide. Without, all was cheerless ; no break in the leaden pall that covered the city ; no sound but the drip, drip of the melting snow from gutter and roof. I looked at the desolation within and the gloom without, and, turning away with a sigh, sat down to follow up a train of thought little flattering to the government under which Nihilism was possible. We had been, perhaps, under arrest three-quarters of an hour in all, in the course of which time a new captive, the correspondent of the *Daily News*, had joined us—much to our amusement—when, suddenly, the order came to move. It had been decided to send us

to the district police station. Two *dvorniks*, two *gorodovoy*s (policemen), and a sergeant were told off to escort us, and the officer whispered instructions in their ears, the meaning of which we shrewdly guessed.

Judging by the delight depicted on their faces, the inhabitants of Sapper's-lane, St. Petersburg, must have been very grateful to us for the spectacle we provided for them, as with our formidable escort we were marched off—all but C—the last comer—to the station, a proceeding which affected us variously. Our German friend, a good-looking flaxen-haired fellow, poet and wine-merchant, blushed; I laughed; Dobson was indignant; while P—, as a resident, looked furtively round, lest some acquaintance should happen to pass. Ten minutes walk brought us to the police station, where we were ushered into the presence of *prístaf* Müller, now promoted to the rank of major, the fortunate individual who had planned and carried out the affair of Friday morning. Hearing how we had been caught, this hero, in a tone that reminded me of the Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, ordered us to prison. "Off with their heads," said the Queen. "Away with them to the cells," said the Major; but P— expostulated, and insisted on our right to be taken before the British Ambassador to prove our identity. At this moment in came C—in charge of a *dvornik*, and at once began to indite a telegram to his paper, looking up every now and then to protest, like Bayle, against everything that was said and everything that was done,¹ a proceeding that staggered the Major, who, realising at last that he had now before him the representatives of three of the most powerful journals in the world, changed his manner, becoming all at once as suave and agreeable as possible. He acceded to our demand, put on his sword and revolver, shook hands with us all round with much *empressement*, and left, in order, as he said, to send his *pomóshchnik* (assistant) to

¹ This was Bayle's own justification of his claim to be a Protestant.

escort us to the Embassy. But when, after a short interval, this subordinate official came in, to our disgust rather than surprise the whole argument began afresh. At last, however, P——'s eloquence prevailed to the extent that a compromise was effected, and we were driven off to General Zúroff, prefect of the city. The affair was now, of course, soon at an end. The prefect was, happily, at home, and we were conducted to his presence. His reception of us quite accorded with his reputation as the pink of politeness, and we were at once set at liberty. We had satisfied our curiosity, he said, and there was nothing for him to do but to wish us good evening.

It was a common practice of the police to lay traps such as that we fell into, in the hope of catching friends and accomplices of criminals already arrested. The mistake was to allow publication of the story of the affray. That once done they might catch English newspaper correspondents, but, obviously, not one Nihilist.

For myself, of course, the whole affair was an unqualified success. The luck of it—to be captured as a Nihilist within six weeks of arrival! The whole town talked of it. Schouvéloff was amused; Lord Dufferin interested; Mudford delighted.

The 2nd March, 1880, would be the twenty-fifth anniversary of the accession of Alexander II.; and to celebrate the occasion various foreign princes and high dignitaries, besides every available member of the Imperial family itself, were expected to gather round the throne of the Sovereign of All the Russias in his capital city.

It seems probable that the Nihilist leaders had determined to take this opportunity to deal a mortal blow at Autocracy by destroying the Románoffs root and branch, reckless of who else might fall victims to their nefarious design. But the affair of the 17th January, and a second similarly successful raid effected on the 9th February,

alarmed the conspirators and caused them to precipitate their action.

Of the royal visitors one of the first to arrive was Prince Alexander of Bulgaria, who had now been seven months on the throne as nominee and, so far, the obedient servant of Russia. He reached St. Petersburg on the 16th February, and on the 17th a family dinner was arranged to take place in the Winter Palace at 6 p.m., the usual hour, in honour more especially of his father, Prince Alexander of Hesse, who was due to arrive that evening from Germany. The train was somewhat late and the dinner, in consequence, had to be put off a little ; so that it was twenty minutes past six when, as the Emperor was about to lead the way to the dining-room, situated on the first floor, at the western end of the Palace, he and his assembled guests were startled by the sound of an explosion. All the lights in that part of the Palace went out, and for a few moments confusion reigned. The officers on duty, Colonel Stroyeff and others of the Finland Regiment, rushed towards the guardroom, and called their men to arms. They were answered by groans and shrieks, and, lights having been obtained, the horrible nature of the catastrophe was at once apparent. Scattered about amidst heaps of shattered bricks and other rubbish lay the bodies of fifty-four soldiers, of whom ten were dead, the rest wounded. Some of the poor fellows had been literally blown to pieces ; others had lost an arm or a leg ; all were more or less bruised and battered. Of the Imperial family the Tsarévitch and the Grand Duke Vladímir were the first to reach the scene of the explosion, and the latter at once went off to the neighbouring barracks of the Preobrajénsky Regiment, whence, having rung the alarm bell, he led a detachment back to the Palace.

The Emperor quickly regained his usual bearing, and ordered dinner in another apartment. In the evening, according to general report, he played at cards. The

Empress, who was asleep at the time, did not even wake, and was only told what had occurred next morning.

The apparatus employed to effect the explosion remains unknown. In all probability, however, a slow-match was used, since there was no trace of an electric battery or of an infernal machine. The dynamite was stored in or on an old stove in the basement by a man who for three months had lived there, paying five roubles a month to the three workmen in occupation for permission to lodge there. Immediately over the basement was the guard-room, over that the dining-room. The man was known to them as Feotka, otherwise Feódor Ivánovich, and it was remarked that Mirsky, when asked whom he spoke with after his attempt to shoot General Drenteln,¹ gave the same name, saying that he knew nothing about this mysterious personage, except that he was one of the chiefs of the party. Soloviéff, again, who fired a shot at the Emperor in 1879, referred in his trial to Feódor Ivánovich, who eventually proved to be one Nikolai Khaltúrin. He was caught and hanged for the murder of General Strelnikoff in April, 1882, at Odessa, but his identity was only established after death. The amount of dynamite used was estimated at two poods, or seventy-two pounds. General von Todleben, defender of Sevastopol and captor of Plevna, declared that a little more would have effectually destroyed the dining-room, which, as a matter of fact, suffered less than at first supposed.

I visited the locality next morning—Schouvalóff took me in—and found that though in one place plaster had

¹ Drenteln was one of the few generals who did well in the Turkish war. He was a good soldier, firm but not cruel, a plain, modest man who did not deserve the imputation cast upon him—quite unwittingly—by Alexander II. when in overcoming his reluctance to accept the post of Chief of the Gendarmerie he told him, "I have watched you long and feel assured of your success. Remember what an excellent school you have been through under Mouraviéff, who valued and loved you." On March 13th (1879) the Nihilist Mirsky, overtaking on horseback Drenteln's carriage in the streets of St. Petersburg, fired two bullets at him, but without effect.

fallen from the ceiling of the guard-room, the parquet floor of the dining-room above was intact. Had the guests been already seated they would, therefore, have suffered only from shock. Lord Dufferin was dining at the French Embassy that night, and de Giers, who was present, mentioned that on the way he had heard a loud explosion in the direction of the quay, and had sent for information. When the news came Lord Dufferin hurried to the Palace, where the Emperor, accompanied by the Duchess of Edinburgh, came out to speak with him. His first words were, "Providence has again mercifully saved me."

The result of the explosion in St. Petersburg was a state of public feeling that rapidly grew towards panic. The air was filled with alarming rumours and reports of all kinds, originating no one knew how, spreading with inconceivable rapidity, inspiring the more timid with absolute terror. I had personal knowledge of people who barricaded their rooms at night, kept loaded revolvers by their bedsides, and, seemingly, expected a repetition of the horrors of the French Revolution. Some of the most fearful actually fled the country, and even men not usually apprehensive were in a state of nervous tension, natural enough in the circumstances, but, as events proved, by no means warranted.

The criminals themselves did much to increase the general apprehension by affixing proclamations in conspicuous places to the effect that no preparations need be made for an illumination on the 2nd March, since a better one was already provided for than any the authorities could devise. A dead body, too, presumably that of a spy or traitor, was found on the outskirts of the city stabbed in many places and bearing a note affixed "By order of the Executive Committee." What would the week bring forth? Above all, what the 2nd of March, the day so long looked forward to as one of rejoicing, but now the object of greatest anxiety? That a renewed

attempt would be made was generally believed, and, in the event of its success, we were promised nothing short of a revolution and massacre. An eminent foreign diplomatist likened St. Petersburg to Rome in the time of Tacitus, others made the term of comparison the last days of Louis XV.—a too severe commentary on the Emperor's relations with the Princess Dolgorúkaya. One thing, in any case, was obvious—something must be done and done quickly. There was no time to lose; half measures would not serve; action, prompt, energetic, decisive, would alone meet the case.

And on the 26th of February, nine days after the explosion, action came. The demand of society, the desire of all men, save the Nihilists and their sympathisers, was answered dramatically and with a thoroughness no one had dreamed of anticipating. Rumours had got about on the 24th of an ukase appointing the Armenian general, Count Loris Mélikoff, who had distinguished himself in the Turkish war and afterwards in fighting the plague at Vetliánka, head of a commission of some sort with very large powers. For two days I made vain attempts to transmit the news to England, wasting time, money and temper in the effort. The censor was inexorable. Meantime we correspondents, of course, were on the look-out night and day for the document itself. Various people, including Schouvaloff, promised me an early copy of it, but, luckily, I added the simple precaution of employing commissionaires, in relays, to keep watch for it at the printing office of the Senate whence such things issued. Late on the evening of the 26th one of them brought me a small fly-sheet wet from the press, and I saw at once the unparalleled nature of its contents. I translated it and drove to the chief telegraph office, fearing another rebuff. But this time I was agreeably surprised. The document was now public property, said my friend the censor, and he congratulated me on being the first in the field. Luck, indeed,

favoured me, for the *Standard* was the only morning paper to publish it next day (27th February). It did so with the comment, "A document like the present ukase is revolution even in revolutionary Russia. *It is not absolutism, but the acknowledgment of Anarchy.*"

Mélikoff was appointed chief of a "Supreme Executive Commission," with powers more extensive, probably, than have ever been formally conferred on a subject by any ruler before or since.

The ukase was hailed by the Russian press with a joy as extravagant as unanimous. Even society, which in Russia was wont to criticise everything, distinguished itself on this occasion by an absence of criticism that showed the measure itself to be generally approved and the person chosen untrammelled by party ties and obligations. Mélikoff began by issuing an appeal to society—in the larger sense—for assistance which, as I wrote at the time, struck a sympathetic chord in every heart, but raised hopes that were hardly likely to be realised. Was the appeal genuine, or was it merely a phrase to calm the public mind?

Society, obviously, could only co-operate if power were granted it to express an opinion. Confidence was largely restored, but a calm examination of the facts led inevitably to the conclusion that we were as far as ever from a satisfactory solution of the difficulties by which the task of re-establishing peace and good order in Russia was surrounded. The Chief of the Supreme Commission had been endowed with powers such as had never been granted to a subject in Russia before; he had an opportunity of doing good that rarely falls to the lot of one man to possess. What use would he make of it? Would he dare to reverse the policy of his predecessors, of the score or more of ministers, governor generals, prefects, and policemen who wielded piece-meal the power now gathered in his single hand? He appealed to society to help him. Would he venture to give society the

means of co-operating with him? Without representation, without liberty of the press—nay, without freedom of deed, of word, of thought—what could poor society do to help the autocratic power which first gagged and bound it, and then called loudly upon it for help?

A feeling of hope flushed the heart of every liberal-minded man in Russia when he read the Emperor's ukase and thought of the consequences that might follow from it; but the opinion soon spread that, with all his powers and all his talent, Loris Mélikoff would succeed no better than the governors-general; that he would be, in fact, nothing more than a high-policeman, and would simply attempt to suppress Nihilism by high-police measures, an attempt that must inevitably fail, and so it proved.

But on the very next day the police made one of their most vaunted successes, for they arrested Vera Zasúlich, who had ventured back to St. Petersburg from safety in Switzerland.¹

Abroad, the effect produced by the attempt on the Tsar was very great, but though much sympathy was expressed, and doubtless felt, with the Emperor and his family, Russia at that time had few well-wishers, and it is not to be gainsaid that a great many people in more than one foreign country found a grim satisfaction in contemplating the troubles that assailed her.

Russo-German relations were now, and for a long time to come, in a curiously ambiguous state. Between the Courts, and especially between the two Emperors,

¹ In the beginning of 1878 the trial ended of 193 persons gathered from all parts as conspirators against the government, the majority being let off lightly. Next day Vera Zasúlich shot and severely wounded General Trépoff with a pistol. This was the signal for many revolutionary crimes throughout the country. On the 31st March, Vera Zasúlich was acquitted by a jury on the principle that if condemned her punishment would, in their eyes, be disproportionate to her offence. The verdict was hailed enthusiastically by a great crowd of students and their followers in the streets; but it was the death-blow to trial by jury for political offences, which were thenceforward dealt with "administratively."

the old friendship continued unimpaired, in spite of the Russo-Turkish war, the Berlin Congress, and the subsequent press bickerings and polemics; in spite even of the very real differences of opinion that arose between the two countries. And in this matter Alexander II.'s unwavering belief in the loyal friendship of the old Emperor William ran parallel to Schouvaloff's perfect confidence in his chancellor, Prince Bismarck. Yet Russia's modest efforts to put her eastern frontier in a reasonable state of defence gave rise to virulent attacks on the part of the German press, and on the very day that the Mélikoff ukase appeared in the *Standard*, that journal published a telegram from its Berlin correspondent stating his conviction that war between Russia and Germany was inevitable. Looking back it seems a pity that English papers should ever have been represented abroad by German Jews, whose mission in life seemed to be to hound on England even more than their own country to war with Russia. My very able colleagues in Berlin and Vienna, for years, came indubitably into this category; and this fact suggests doubt as to the value of anonymity for persons in such positions. Even in those days readers might have discounted soberly certain fiery lucubrations had they been duly reminded of their real origin.

When the 2nd of March came and Alexander II. celebrated his half-jubilee, the Emperor William caused two autograph letters to be delivered by special envoy to his Imperial brother, the nature of which we learnt from the Tsar's reference to them on occasion of a banquet at the Winter Palace (March 2nd) in honour of the Kaiser's birthday, namely :

"His Majesty the Emperor and King, whose birthday we happily celebrate, has but recently given fresh proofs of his old and unfailing friendship, which I reciprocate from the bottom of my heart, in addressing me, on the occasion of the anniversary of my accession to the Throne, two letters, one

of which I hastened to publish. The other was a private note, but both of them have moved me deeply. The feelings and wishes they express are the counterpart of my own, and I count fearlessly on the maintenance and consolidation, to the common benefit of our two countries, of the good relations that have existed between them for more than a century. I drink to the health of his Majesty the Emperor and King, my best friend. May God preserve him and grant us the felicity of renewing our congratulations in many a year to come ! ”

And so it went on. There were powerful influences at work in both countries antagonistic to peace, and, so long as Alexander II. lived, while the two rulers continued to afford the world the touching spectacle of tender and faithful friendship, Russo-German relations suffered alternate amelioration and relapse, so that, as I wrote at the time, one was driven to think of a good understanding between the two countries as a kind of Penelope's web, made up during daylight to be undone in the dark.

With France there was little sympathy in Russia save in Panslavist circles ; and though, as a matter of course, the Republican Government offered its congratulations with the rest to the Russian autocrat on the anniversary of his accession, it far more than nullified any good impressions thus made by almost immediately afterwards (March 6th) liberating the Nihilist Hartmann who had been arrested in Paris on the charge of being the author of last year's railway attempts on the Tsar,¹ and this though the Russian Embassy had informed the French Foreign Office that proof positive of Hartmann's guilt was actually on the way to Paris. The anger caused by this unfriendly act was deep indeed. The *Journal de*

¹ Two attempts were made to blow up the Imperial train in which the Emperor Alexander II. was returning to St. Petersburg from the Crimea (Nov. 1879), one at Alexandrovsk, the second near the Kursk Railway Station in Moscow. Both failed in their object, though in the second considerable damage was done to the train.

St. Pétersbourg, after remarking that Europe concerted measures against the phylloxera, but not against that much worse pest the regicide, referred sarcastically to the congratulations of the French Press and Government on the escape of the Imperial family and, more recently, of General Loris Mélikoff, from assassination, adding: "The dominant classes in France, which profess to be guided only by public opinion, will kindly remember, perhaps, that Russia, too, has a public opinion. They may deem it less enlightened than their own; but it exists, and finds the greatest difficulty in reconciling these congratulations with the haste to liberate an individual convicted of having attempted the life of Russia's Sovereign. It does not understand how anyone can congratulate another on escaping assassination, yet, having caught the assassin, set him free. Perhaps the Russian people are wanting in political intelligence; but the much-vaunted civilisation of which people are so proud in the West seems to them a barbarism the moment it gives such results, which it considers a demonstration directly hostile to the Russian nation and its Sovereign."

The Russian Ambassador, Prince Orlóff, left Paris, and it was some little time ere the relations between the two countries became once more reasonably friendly. Schouvalóff's prejudices were, naturally, strengthened.

With Austria, needless to say, there could be no genuine friendship; nor, thanks to the Afghan and Central Asian embroglio and the memories of 1878, with England.

Such, then, were the circumstances in which Alexander the Liberator celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his accession; but there was one set-off, at least, for all the troubles and dangers that beset him. In spite of natural anxiety at home and doleful references to the "Ides of March" abroad, the celebration was made the occasion of a genuine and spontaneous outburst of loyalty and popular enthusiasm for the sovereign to whom, after

all, Russia owed much. A full account of this, by me, appeared in the *Standard* two days after that paper had rashly written "Unless the Nihilists, as they threaten, contrive to commemorate it by another of their diabolical explosions it (the anniversary) will pass in austere and melancholy silence." It is pleasant to remember that though the paper I served differed with me on many occasions in opinions and judgment, it never for that reason suppressed my telegrams.

Meantime, forty-eight hours only after his appointment had been made public, an attempt was made to assassinate the Dictator. A puny little man of pronounced Jewish type, named Mladyétsky, shot at him while being driven to his official residence in the Morskaya after a visit to the French Ambassador, General Chanzy. The bullet pierced the back of Mélikoff's coat, below the waist on the right side, but failed even to graze the skin. As Lord Dufferin happily phrased it when addressing his congratulations to Mélikoff only a few minutes after the shot had been fired, it was probably the first time his enemies had ever had a chance of aiming at that part of his body.¹ It was my melancholy duty to be present at the would-be murderer's execution by hanging two days later. He showed great courage, laughing disdainfully at the spectators.

I asked Schouvaloff on this occasion if his life had ever been attempted. He said, "No, but there was always, of course, the chance of it. The only precaution I took (when *Grand-maitre de Police*) was to have a broad writing-table between me and the individuals admitted to my room, and, in a half-open drawer at my right hand, a loaded revolver. I never had to use it; but on one horrible occasion a man suddenly drew a razor and cut his throat in front of me. Another time, a very excited individual, in the midst of some protest, fell dead of heart disease. It says something, perhaps,

¹ *Life*, vol. i. p. 312.

for myself and my methods that after years of almost unlimited authority I left behind me, as far as I can possibly tell, few if any personal enemies."

The result of the English general election in the spring of 1880, involving the return of Gladstone and the Liberals to power, was of course highly gratifying to the Russians, who had every reason to detest Lord Beaconsfield and his party. But the *Béreg*, a new "official" journal, gave prominence to the letter of an anonymous correspondent, who warned his compatriots that if they counted on Liberal sympathy they might find themselves mistaken. "The same jealousy of Russian influence will exist, and the most that can be looked for is that the new Cabinet may pursue its policy openly and without theatrical demonstrations." Schouvaloff's opinion was that the change meant the end of Russia's isolation, which was based more or less on the personal relations established at the Berlin Congress between the statesmen of Great Britain, Germany and Austria, Vienna becoming then the central point for English influence. Putting aside Gladstone's recent attack upon Austria (Midlothian speech of March 17th), it was obvious that an international policy based upon personal relations could not survive such a change as must be occasioned by the advent of the Liberals to power. Taking into consideration the antagonism between French and English interests in Egypt he looked for some strengthening of England's good relations with Germany, and possibly some *rapprochement* between England and Russia. In transmitting these views I added my "belief, not without foundation, that in the latter case there would be every disposition on the part of Russia to come to an agreement with England upon all outstanding questions." Unhappily, although, as the *Gólos* wrote at this time, Gladstone's leading idea when in Paris (October, 1879) had been to make France a connecting

link between England and Russia, the crazy fear for the safety of India nullified all movement in this direction and bit by bit brought the two latter countries to the verge of war.

On May 2nd Count Dmitri Tolstóy resigned the double post of Minister of Public Instruction and Procureur of the Holy Synod, and was succeeded by Sabúroff in the former office, by Pobyedonóstseff in the latter. Two months later the Radstockist prayer-meetings of Colonel Páshkoff were suppressed and himself exiled, much to the dismay and indignation of my friend Schouvaloff's wife, one of his most ardent followers. She had, I remember, as coachman, a fine, bearded fellow, a very bad driver, but a convert, a "believer," *i.e.* a Pashkovite, so not lightly to be dismissed. One day he drove against a lamp-post and the countess, losing her temper, began to rate him soundly. At the first pause he turned his head, and said with much gravity, "You should not be angry; anger comes from the Devil. You told me so yourself!" The rebuke was taken with Christian meekness. I shall have more to say of these Radstockists presently.¹

¹P. 311.

CHAPTER IV

A secret code—Death of an Empress—Leroy-Beaulieu and the Russian censor—A country visit—Ruhenthal—Nicholas I. and the *Black-heads*—Mitau—The Rastrellis and Biron—A Le Nôtre garden—"God's little country"—St. John's Eve—Shooting a pike—A romantic flight—Schouvaloff's mother—Catherine's generosity—The Metropolitan Platón—Churches militant—Alexander II. and the clergy—Third Section abolished—Nicholas I. and Pushkin—The Marquis Tseng—A Nihilist trial—Alexander II. and his mistress—Christmas in the woods—Shooting a bear—Capercaillie stalking—Lord Dufferin and the House of Lords—Schouvaloff's warning—The Tekke Campaign—Geok Tepë stormed.

SOON after my arrival in St. Petersburg I had made the acquaintance of a Dutch colleague, Mr. Rikoff, correspondent of the *Rotterdamsche Courant*, who taught me a simple, yet ingenious way of compiling a code that should baffle the censorship. All I had to do was to take a blank book, number the pages, or, rather, the leaves—to gain room—from 01 to 99, and the lines on each double page or leaf also from 01 to 99, giving me thus nearly 10,000 possible entries; then write in, alphabetically, all the names, words and phrases likely to be of use, and send a duplicate by Queen's messenger to the *Standard*. To get a despatch through I selected the words, etc., I wanted, each word, name or phrase being, of course, represented by four ciphers, of which the first two gave the number of the leaf, the second two the item on that leaf; thus, 3129 would be leaf 31 item 29, which would be, say, *The Russians have taken Geok Tepë*. To disguise

the code I would make up a telegram, generally with the aid of some business friend, about bristles or rails, or flax, or anything else, containing the figures I wanted to send. It did not matter how many words were written in, or how the figures were divided up, so long as they kept their proper sequence. The recipient simply ignored all words and divided up the figures into groups of four. The *Standard* furnished me with private addresses in London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna, where instructions were given to forward any such telegrams immediately to the head office in London.

I made very sparing use of the code, and sent only brief messages by it, to lessen the chance of discovery. But I owed to it several very successful *coups*, above all the exclusive announcement of the fight at Penjdeh, on the Murghab river in 1885; and I was never caught. The censor, indeed, more than once congratulated me on my success in baffling his efforts; and, as a matter of fact, he became, unintentionally, my best friend, for whereas my own telegrams got through, those of my rivals were held up, thus securing me on various important occasions a priority of news.

The first occasion on which I made use of the code was that of the death of the Empress which took place on the 5th June, 1880. The message was duly received, but, as it happened, was of little use; for, the death having taken place early in the morning, the information reached the Court, and through the Court-newsman the press in London, the same day.

The way in which I learnt the event was somewhat strange, and serves to show how strongly the element of chance may enter into a newspaper correspondent's successes. Other instances will be noticed later on.

I was living, temporarily, in the Kirpíchny-pereúlok (Brick-lane), off the great Morskáya Street, and one morning my Esthonian cook, bringing me a cup of tea in bed, remarked, in a casual sort of way, "The Empress

is dead, Iván Ivánovich." I rubbed my eyes. "Dead! How do you know? She was certainly alive yesterday." "Well, the milkman says so." "But how should he know?" "He serves someone at the Winter Palace." It sounded mere gossip, but, to make sure, I dressed, took a *droszky*, and drove to Schouváloff. "Hullo, Iván Ivánovich! What brings you here so early?" It was not quite 9 o'clock. "The Empress is dead!" "Nonsense, she was alive all right last night. Who told you?" "My cook, and the milkman told her!" "H'm! Well, it's an unlikely story; but wait a minute, I'll go in next door to Sheremétiëff; he is bound to know."¹ Ten minutes later Schouváloff came back. "You are perfectly right, but the remarkable thing is that she only died, or rather, was found dead in bed, *at 7 o'clock this morning!* I must be off to the Palace at once. Come round this afternoon and I will tell you all about it."

The friendship between the Courts of Berlin and St. Petersburg was once more emphasised by the presence at the Empress's funeral of the Crown Prince Frederick. The Queen was represented by the Duke of Edinburgh; the Austrian Emperor by the Archduke William. It was on this occasion that, for the first time, I learnt the Russian custom of solemnising the 9th, 20th and 40th days after decease; it being a tenet of the Orthodox Church that the soul is not finally divorced from the body after death for forty days—the term of Christ's sojourn upon earth after his resurrection. This, however, by no means puts an end to the prayers for the departed, as the Russians believe in the perfectibility of the human soul in a future state, without admitting the Roman tenet of purgatory.

In July of this year M. Anatole Leroy Beaulieu, the well-known author of *L'Empire des Tzars et les Russes*,

¹ Count Sheremétiëff was then Grand Chamberlain; his magnificent house, with its gardens, occupied a large space between the Fontanka canal and the street Liténaya.

paid a visit to Russia and was very well received in the capital, officially as well as privately, yet at the same time an article of his on Russia in the *Revue des deux Mondes* was cut bodily out of that magazine by the censor.¹

One great personal advantage derived from my friendship with Schouváloff was that in his company I could, within reasonable limits, absent myself from St. Petersburg without risk of being called to account for overstepping my privileges as to leave, though not until I had had a tussle with Mudford on the subject. Yet it was obviously an advantage to a newspaper correspondent to be the guest of such a man and meet his friends.

So that, in summer, when things quieted down again, I spent a week with him and his sister and brother-in-law, the Bóbrinskys, already referred to,² at Vártemiaki, Paul Schouváloff's country place some twenty miles north of St. Petersburg, the shooting of which Count Peter leased from his brother. The house was a wooden one of no great size, with a smaller one near by used as a shooting lodge, especially in winter. The estate, a remnant only of a much vaster property, consisted of a stretch of bog and forest, with a small amount only of cultivated land, some 200 square versts in extent. The game included an occasional bear or two, elk, wolf, otter, mink, lynx and fox, besides capercaillie, black-game, partridge, willow and hazel-grouse, woodcock, snipe in three varieties—jack, single, and double or solitary snipe—and wild fowl. The little river Okhta, in which pearl-mussels grew, wound its way through the garden, and one end of the estate included part of the more westerly of the two lakes at Toksovo. We went, often, to Vártemiaki in winter, more rarely at other seasons. On this occasion we played garden bowls at midnight.³

¹ A Russian friend who was censor himself, but of plays only, held up to me his mutilated copy of the *Revue*, with tears of humiliation and anger in his eyes.

² P. 31 note.

³ See map, p. 254.

I then spent a few days in Finland catching fish big and small in the waters of the celebrated Harraka Club, of which I soon afterwards became a member.¹

My next visit (in June), the first of many, was to Ruhenthal, Schouváloff's place in Courland.² We went to Riga, twenty-four hours by rail in those days, and were there received in state by the Mayor and Corporation, Schouváloff having been Governor-General of the Baltic Provinces fifteen years back and very popular, though a Russian. He had not been there since. An industrial Exhibition was being held and we were conducted round it by the big-wigs, creating no little sensation, for which, of course, I was in no way responsible.

It was very hot weather, so hot that when at last we came to a kiosque of wines, liqueurs, etc., we were not proof against the temptations that assailed us, much to our regret next morning, when we were both of us very unwell. Each exhibitor was eager to obtain Schouváloff's approbation of his goods, the authorities no less anxious to extend all hospitality to him. Luckily we escaped a dinner of 1,000 students and others to which we were invited as soon as the Count's arrival became known.

Talking of drink reminds me that the Emperor Nicholas when at Riga addressing the *Schwarzen-Häupter*, said, "Talk German, pray in German, but let your hearts be Russian!" This was engraved on a large *bocal* (glass drinking cup), which Schouváloff afterwards, when Governor-General, obtained possession of. The inscription was in German, "And, in truth," said my friend, "that is the right policy for the Baltic Provinces!"³

¹ For Harraka see p. 325.

² See map at end of vol.

³ The *Schwarzen-Häupter* (Black-heads) belonged to a celibate mercantile guild or society, dating from 1390, and modelled on the Order of the Knights of the Sword (*Schwertritter*), afterwards absorbed into the Teutonic Order. Defenders first of the town, then of their own interests only, the Black-heads in course of time degenerated into a merely social club, retaining, however, elements of historic interest, such as celibacy. See that excellent little book, *Die Deutsch-*

Continuing our journey next day to Mitau, the capital of Courland, we drove to the palace built at the same time and by the same architect, Rastrelli, as Ruhenthal, both of them for the celebrated Biron,¹ otherwise Duke Ernest John of Courland. Here the Governor had a grand breakfast ready for us, to which all the male notables of the place had been invited; but before we sat down he took me into a dressing-room hung with tapestry, to wash my hands. The tapestry, so he told me, had been woven during exile in Siberia by the Duchess of Courland, Biron's wife, and the subject bore this out, for it was hunting scenes amongst the Samoyeds or, more probably, the Ostiaks.

There were two Rastrellis, Count Carlo-Bartolomeo, who was called to Russia by Peter I. to found cannon, statuary, etc., and his more famous son Bartolomeo, born c. 1700, who, on the accession of Catherine I. (1725), was sent abroad to complete his artistic studies, and only came back after the accession of Anne (1730). He then drew up the plan for the original Winter Palace and built it in five years, from 1735 to 1739. This brought him into contact with Biron, who entrusted him with the construction of the palaces of Mitau and Ruhenthal. When Elizabeth came to the throne (1741) and Biron was exiled, these buildings were left unfinished, and the rich doors and window-frames were brought to St. Petersburg and used by Rastrelli for the Razoumóvsky, now the Aníchkoff Palace (1743). He then built the great Imperial Palace at Tsarskoe Selo, Count Stróganoff's house on the Nevsky Prospect, the chief church at Sergief-Strelna, and the Smolno Monastery—buildings that bear eloquent witness against those who condemn,

russsischen Ostseeprovinzen, von J. G. Kohl, Dresden and Leipzig, 1841, erster theil, p. 151 sq.

¹ Also written Biren, the original name having been *Bühren*. But Biron, himself, adopted not only the name but the arms of the famous French ducal family.

unconditionally, the *baroque* and the *roccocco* in architecture and ornament.

Biron died at Mitau in 1772, aged eighty-two, having been restored to the ducal throne by Catherine II. ten years previously.

In the afternoon we drove on—twenty miles—to Ruhenthal, a huge white house built round a courtyard, with twenty-five windows in a row on each of the three unbroken sides, the fourth being pierced for the main entrance.

The house, like so many buildings in Russia, where stone is rare, wood or white-washed brick the rule, and the winter rough, looked as though recovering from something like an attack of small-pox—pitted and blotched all over; but it was in good substantial repair and splendidly built. The roofing was entirely of oak balks, from the neighbouring forest, and stretched the whole width both of main body and wings. There must have been many thousand pounds' worth of timber there. The state rooms were very fine, but the "golden" drawing-room was minus its great mirrors which had been taken away by the French in 1812. French and even German names were scribbled and scratched on the empty spaces, and preserved scrupulously as a memento of the invasion, for that part of the house had served as a hospital, and bloodstains were still visible on the floor.¹

In the garden there were pyramids of cannon balls, large and small, bearing witness to the fact that at Ruhenthal Marshal Macdonald accumulated his stores of heavy guns and other material for the abortive siege of Riga. Here too, under an oblong mound a hundred and more soldiers of the Grand Army lay buried, with birch-trees drooping above them. For, at the very end of September, 1812, the Russians, having retaken Mitau, made an attempt on Ruhenthal; but the Prussians

¹ Marshal Macdonald's army included a Prussian contingent.

under Kleist drove them back after a pitched battle on a small scale, the losses on both sides amounting to no more than four hundred and fifty, killed and wounded.

The inhabitants of the chateau at this time would have furnished a novelist with good material. They consisted, besides servants, of two families, one that of B—— the agent, the other that of a doctor to whom the Count gave lodging and fuel gratis for the benefit of the neighbourhood. The doctor was a clever man, speaking many languages and enjoying a great reputation among the surrounding gentry and peasantry. He was a photographer, an astronomer, but above all, so it was said, an intriguer. He and the B——'s were mortal foes, hating one another as only those forced unwillingly into close and perpetual proximity can hate. Mrs. B—— hinted—as the origin of the feud—at certain over-gallant propositions made to her by the doctor long years ago, when, according to her own not incredible account, she was not only young but pretty.

The garden, with park beyond, had been laid out after a plan originally drawn up by Le Nôtre, in the style of Versailles, but had been so long neglected that though not quite answering to Tennyson's description in *Mariana* or Shelley's in the *Sensitive Plant*, it had become a mere wilderness—the main avenues untrimmed and displaying sad gaps where trees had rotted and fallen, the minor alleys so overgrown and tangled that it required the zeal and acumen of an explorer to trace them. Standard roses had degenerated into briars; fruit-trees, unpruned, had ceased to bear; noble trees, overshadowed and choked by base ones, drooped and withered for want of light and air. Luckily one splendid lime-tree had a corner all to itself, but it was almost hidden from view till I persuaded Schouvaloff to let me clear a way before it by hewing down two scraggy aspens that stood enviously screening it. There were cherry-trees, too, into

which in due season one or two of us younger people could climb and sit at ease with more luscious fruit within reach than we could eat.

The large pond, canals and fountains were choked with weed, and the abiding place of frogs innumerable, who croaked to silence, or so it seemed, the nightingales in the neighbouring thickets. My friend gave me *carte blanche* to do what I liked towards restoring the original plan of the garden, and, moreover, placed at my disposal a couple of woodmen, with axes, ropes and saws. It was a delightful occupation, and the wilderness in the course of successive visits gradually recovered the semblance at least of Le Nôtre's idea. Now, alas! as military operations naturally follow old lines, I fear greatly for Ruhenthal, but it may be that another mound and a bigger one will be all that is left of the recent invaders.

The estate, as a whole, was grievously cut up when between 1865 and 1867 the long-emancipated serfs in the Baltic Provinces were for the first time allowed to own land; for Schouvaloff as a Russian and as local Governor-General felt called upon to give an example, and did so by endowing the peasants with whatever land they were then cultivating or occupying. They, in turn, in many cases at least, sold to others, and so it came about that the quondam owner now had many independent proprietors settled within his borders, over whom he had lost all control. Naturally, too, as an absentee, he had been robbed right and left, as our visit revealed. I was amazed, indeed, at the excessive leniency shown by this redoubtable chief of the Third Section¹ to many gross offenders; but, in very truth, he was the kindest and most forgiving of men.

I noticed how rich and prosperous the country was, affording a great contrast to neighbouring Russia proper—"Gottes Ländchen"—God's little country, Duke

¹ See p. 86 and note.

Gotthard called it,¹ but this was less the result of natural advantages than of the superior education and industry of the people, added to the absence of the communal system. These conditions combined had led to the development of a flourishing agriculture, in proof whereof in the telegraphic reports regarding the state of the crops in forty-nine provinces of the Empire, which I happened to read at this time, Courland was the only one where the harvest prospects were said to be "thoroughly satisfactory."

On the eve of St. John (old style) all the neighbourhood gathered in the Count's park at nightfall, and after rustic feasting, liberally furnished by him, bonfires were lighted, and peasant girls in white dresses danced in rounds, singing Lettish songs in honour of the harvest god Ligho. They crowned Schouváloff and me with oak wreaths, an honour I, at least, felt to be quite unmerited; but, being young and active, I took his turn as well as my own in jumping through the flames, a vital part of the ritual.

There were grand oaks, some not less than three hundred years old, in the forest where we went to shoot foxes that would not be shot; but where we did actually turn out and kill some unhappy badgers, for the Count had a whole pack of dachshunds, and this was the one occasion on which I saw them put to the use implied by their name. A solemn stork stood by the hour on one leg on a nest, now empty of young, at the top of a stumpy fir-tree. A vast colony of rooks cawed in a wood some way from the house. Once and again a blue roller flitted by. From a lime-tree branch, low down, a goldfinch sitting on belated eggs eyed me unconcernedly.

¹ Gotthard Kettler, last of the Livonian Masters of the Teutonic Order, was created (first) Duke of Courland and Semigallia, in 1561, by Sigismund Augustus, King of Poland, whose feudal supremacy was then acknowledged. Courland was formally united to Russia in 1795.

The day after our arrival I excited the wonder and admiration of my host and his friends in very simple fashion. Walking for the first time to the forest, gun on shoulder, we came to a high-arched bridge over a stream, a tributary of the river Aa, itself an affluent of the Dvina, banked and choked in places by rushes and reeds, lilies white and yellow, red purslain and white water-crowfoot. There were water-voles, too, moor-hens, dabchicks, king-fishers and solemn herons. In the shallows the stream ran fairly fast.

It was a blazing hot day, and, taking in at a glance the probabilities, I slipped a cartridge into my Westley-Richards and snapped the breach to, with some ostentation. "What are you going to shoot?" asked Schouváloff surprised. "*Shchúku* (a pike)." "A pike? Shoot a pike? Never heard of such a thing! How do you know there are any?" "Well, just wait a moment all of you." They stopped, and I, walking gingerly on to the bridge, looked cautiously over the stone parapet. There, sure enough, was a good-sized pike (nearly 4 lbs.) basking below me. I raised my gun, aimed and fired; up turned a white belly; I called Schouváloff, and he with the rest coming forward saw with astonishment the result of my shot. A keeper had it out in a trice; we had baked pike for supper that night, and I have a suspicion that this very simple performance lingers yet in the memory of Ruhenthal.

One thing only had not been neglected at this "Liberty Hall"—the kitchen garden, namely, which was in excellent order, and contained enough cabbages, potatoes, peas, beans, etc., to feed a regiment, though ostensibly kept up only for the requirements of the dozen or so inhabitants of the chateau. No doubt the squint-eyed gardener reaped his own reward—the Count certainly had no share in it.

That evening, walking in the garden after dinner, Schouváloff told me the story of his mother's flight from

Ruhenthal, when left a widow by the death of her first husband, Prince Platón Zúboff. Young—she was only eighteen—pretty, enormously wealthy, she was, or thought herself, in danger of death or a forced marriage at the hands of the Zúboff family. Her faithful old steward had a million roubles in coffered gold. Concerting measures they left Ruhenthal secretly and suddenly, and made their way to Italy. Here two years and more were spent, and then, the money being at an end, the lady returned to Russia in time for the coronation of Nicholas I., and met and married Schouvaloff's father. He (Schouvaloff) remembered that long afterwards, when travelling in Italy, if a villa pleased her she would buy it at any price, instal herself, remain a few weeks, then sell it for next to nothing to the first bidder.

Platón Zúboff, born in 1767, succeeded Demítrieff-Mámonoff in Catherine's favour on 18th June, 1789. The *chronique scandaleuse* of that great lady, so pithily characterised by Byron in *Don Juan*, tells us that he remained alone with her on 21st June till 11 o'clock at night—very late for those days—and on the 24th received a present of Rs. 10,000 and a ring with her Majesty's portrait. Catherine, no Astarte, was generous to her lovers: she bestowed on Zúboff, further, the orders of St. Anne and St. Alexander Nevsky and the rank of major-general. The death of Potyómkin soon afterwards made his position secure. He received appointments to various exalted offices and the gift of large estates in Lithuania and Courland (Ruhenthal and Salven) comprising 50,000 "souls"; also the higher orders of St. Vladímir and St. Andrew. The Holy Roman Emperor, to please Catherine, made him first a count (1793) and then a prince (1796)—a goodly array of honours for one whose chief merit was that, like Sir Willoughby Patterne, "he had a leg." On the accession of Paul I. Zúboff was exiled, but soon recalled, and on the 11th March, 1801, took a principal part in the assassination of that

unhappy monarch.¹ Thenceforward he lived in retirement at Ruhenthal till his death in 1822. Less than a year before that event he married a Polish girl, Thekla Ignátievna Valentínovich, whose only child by him died soon after birth. She it was who became the wife of Count Andréi Schouváloff, and the mother of my friends, Peter and Paul.

On another occasion—I quote from my diary—Schouváloff said :

“ Platón, now Metropolitan of Kieff, is very coarse, but an able man. When I went to Riga as Governor-General (1864), the Russian and German elements were at daggers drawn and, of course, Platón sided with the Russians. My first problem was to reconcile them in some way, and I began by giving dinners and *soirées*, to which I invited both parties. Platón came to the first dinner and I received him with honour—went out to the staircase to meet him ; seated him next myself, etc. . . . I, even, had separate dishes specially prepared for him, because the black clergy may not eat meat. He ate a very good dinner, and afterwards my wife engaged him in conversation and he became the centre of the ladies' circle, comprising those of the highest Baltic-German society. After a time I went up to him and remarked that I feared he had fed poorly, on lenten fare, while others feasted. His answer was of a nature to bring confusion on his listeners. The local fair ones set him down, of course, as a Russian barbarian, for whom my wife, on her part, could only blush. Later on, he said something about Peter the Great coming to Riga and (I modify his expression) 'claiming' every good-looking girl he saw.

“ A great question at this time was the religion of those whose fathers had been baptized as Orthodox and had professed this Faith—as many did—on the promise of land. That promise was in many cases not fulfilled and they eventually relapsed, re-baptising their children as Lutherans. There was bitter quarrelling between the clergy of the two denominations on this account, and it went so far that children were seized by the Orthodox clergy and baptised by force ; and

¹ It was Platón Zúboff's brother Nicholas, some say, who struck the last blow and split the unhappy Emperor's temple.

in one case the infant was killed during the struggle that took place! I went to St. Petersburg to see what could be done, and a meeting was held under the presidency of the Emperor at which it was decided that no measures should be taken publicly—that I should simply pay no attention to the complaints of one side or other, but let the people go their own way. After a time Platón wrote to me, complaining that no reply had been given to any of the numerous complaints he had made. I donned full uniform, and all my orders, or most of them, and paid him an official visit, in the course of which I explained the resolution come to by the Emperor at St. Petersburg. 'Then the Emperor condones and even encourages apostasy?' and, turning to his Majesty's portrait on the wall, he spat at it! I protested; told him that this was going too far; that I was Governor-General, present in my official capacity, and that it was my duty to report him; Platón got frightened and begged me to forget it. I agreed to do so on condition of better behaviour in future, and thenceforth he and I were good friends. I left him at Riga when summoned to other duties.

"Albedinsky, my successor, quarrelled at once with Platón, and the latter was removed and sent, a quasi-exile, to the Don Country. I told Albedinsky that this was a mistake, for Platón knew the Baltic Provinces and the people, and would have dealt with the burning question better than anyone else. Yet it is believed in Moscow that he left the Baltic Provinces through my representations! On the contrary, he never forgot my service in keeping silence over his outburst, and admits to this day that I might have ruined him.

"Once, when I was police-master a fire occurred at the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, and when the firemen got under the roof they began throwing out whatever the monks had stored there. To the great amusement of the people looking on vast quantities of salted meat came tumbling down.

"When travelling with the late Emperor, at the time when I was Chief of the Gendarmerie, I constantly sat between members of the higher Clergy; for they always had to be invited, and when I asked the Emperor where they were to be placed he would invariably answer, 'as far from me as possible!' Now, my position was at the end of the table

opposite his Majesty, so that priests, abbots, bishops, or whatever they happened to be, were placed on either side of me."

Soon after my return to St. Petersburg I telegraphed :

"The colonisation of Siberia goes on satisfactorily. Eighteen thousand exiles pass through Ekaterinburg yearly, eastward bound.

"Of the conscripts in the Government of St. Petersburg last year one half could neither read nor write."

The ironical nature of this message escaped the censor's notice.

On the 20th August the Supreme Executive Commission was abolished even more suddenly and unexpectedly than it had been created, and by an ukase of greater historical significance than that which had given it being. For with the Commission, at a stroke of the pen, went once and for ever the famous Third Section¹—all its affairs, together with its executive organ, the Corps of Gendarmerie, being transferred to the Ministry of the Interior. Established by the despot Nicholas I. under the impression of the Decabrist revolt (1825), this ill-omened institution was credited with having given birth to the very evil it was formed to suppress, for the "affair of December" was the work of a very limited set of aristocrats, and, if anything, showed the general absence of any tendency towards revolution in the Russia of that day. The personal qualities of this or that Chief might mitigate—as in Schouvaloff's case—the severities and injustice of a jurisdiction beyond control and without appeal; but the very sobriquet given him—Peter the Fourth—proves the almost limitless authority at his disposal, an authority no human being ought ever to possess. The Third Section, as the *Sovreménnaia Izviéstia* (*Contemporary News*) remarked, on the occasion of its abolition had, in order to justify its existence, to imagine dangers and transform innocent citizens into evilly-

¹ "Of His Majesty's own Chancellery."

disposed persons, and the most legitimate efforts for the public good into nefarious conspiracies. When at last the inevitable happened and conspiracies were actually formed, with more or less revolutionary aims, the Third Section failed conspicuously in the essential object of its existence, for it neither discovered nor defeated them. It could not even guard itself from danger, as evidenced by the fact that its own chief, Mézentseff, fell the victim of political assassination.¹

Benckendorff's treatment of the poet Pushkin was but a sample of the petty tyranny and interference with perfectly loyal though free-thinking subjects that in numberless less conspicuous cases went very much further, and drove men to sedition.² Nihilism, the *Sovreménnaia Izviéstia* concluded, was in fact the child of the Third Section; and the conservative *Nóvoe Vrémya*, endorsed without qualification the verdict of its Moscow contemporary. Indeed, the Russian press of all shades of opinion hailed, much too hopefully, the abolition of the Third Section as the end of arbitrary

¹ Mézentseff was killed 4th August, 1878, the assassin driving a *knjál* (dagger) into his stomach.

² General Alexander Christofórovich Benckendorff (1783-1844), first chief of the famous Third Section, had distinguished himself greatly in the war with Napoleon. He was of German descent, the founder of the family having been mayor of Riga late in the seventeenth century. Nicholas I. giving audience to Pushkin, whose writings and escapades were not, one must admit, of a nature to conciliate an autocrat, said: "You have committed follies enough, I trust, to act sensibly at last, in which case we need quarrel no more. In future you will send me all you write and I myself will be your censor," a sentence—considering who the interlocutors were—of stupendous fatuity. But Nicholas spoke in sober earnest and not only did he take upon himself to advise, criticise, allow and disallow, the outpourings of Russia's greatest genius, but actually placed him under the tutelage, in so far as concerned conduct, of his high-policeman Benckendorff, a dull martinet, to whom freedom of any kind was anathema, obedience the virtue supreme. He treated Pushkin as a pedant might a froward schoolboy, and his victim felt it bitterly. Benckendorff was created count in 1832 and in default of male issue was succeeded by his nephew Constantine. From him descended the late Ambassador to the Court of St. James.

government in Russia, the inauguration of a reign of law and justice.

Mélikoff by this ukase became Minister of the Interior, and as the affairs of the Supreme Commission as well as those of the Third Section were transferred to that ministry; as, moreover, all the special powers conferred upon the Dictator by the former ukase were renewed in his favour "until We decree otherwise," his authority for the time being remained practically undiminished.

During all this time very little was heard from the so-called Merv expeditionary force; but Skóbelev, telegraphing to the *Nóvoe Vrémya* on the 27th July (8th August), said, in reference to sinister rumours that had got about: "Not only am I not a prisoner, but with a handful of some six hundred brave fellows I have been under the walls of Geok Tepě and bombarded them. The enemy, on foot and horseback, to the number of over ten thousand, attacked us, but were beaten off. Spies report they got more than they liked." The date of this affair was the 10th June.

At the end of August, when the Emperor left for the Crimea, I took the opportunity of revisiting Moscow and Nijni Nóvgorod.

His Majesty, before leaving, gave audience to the Marquis Tseng, who had come from London to negotiate a Treaty in lieu of Chung-how's. The speech of the Chinese Plenipotentiary on the occasion of his presentation, shorn of conventionalities, ran as follows:

"My august Sovereign has charged me to assure your Imperial Majesty that he is inspired by a sincere wish that the question arising from non-ratification of the Treaty concluded should be decided in a spirit of harmony and justice, and is firmly convinced that this will be to the advantage of both Empires and serve to strengthen friendly relations between them."

The Emperor, who in April had sent a naval force to

the Far East to bring pressure to bear upon China, in his reply said haughtily :

"I am very glad to see here the representative of China. My intentions and wishes are in conformity with those expressed by the Ambassador on behalf of the Chinese Government. Unhappily, the action of the Chinese Government did not fully answer to my expectations, and I have but just received the news that the Chinese Government has resolved to satisfy all our demands. This may perhaps serve as a good beginning for further negotiations. I presume that it is due to the representations of the Ambassador. The news of Chung-how's pardon is as agreeable to me as that of his condemnation was unwelcome. I leave this city in the course of the week, and the Ambassador would do well to lose no time in making known to M. de Giers the proposals he has to make, as M. de Giers will accompany me."

The resulting Treaty of St. Petersburg will be dealt with later. It was Russia who gave way and China whose demands were fulfilled.¹

In November I was present at a trial which resulted in the hanging of two more Nihilists. They, with the rest of a revolutionary band formed at Lipetsk in 1879, had been betrayed by the Jew Goldenberg, the assassin of Prince Kropotkin, Governor-General of Kharkoff. It was officially made known that Goldenberg, having made his confession, had hanged himself in prison. Few of his victims were arrested immediately, but they were nearly all caught sooner or later. Their chief, Mikháiloff, was arrested at the end of 1880. He was succeeded by Jeliáboff, who had helped to lay mines under the rails at Alexandrovsk and under the Kazán bridge in St. Petersburg—two of the many abortive attempts on the Emperor's life. Sophie Peróvskaya was said to be Jeliáboff's mistress, but that, as likely as not, was a calumny. We shall hear of them all very soon.

The Emperor, accompanied by Mélikoff, returned to the capital early in December, and on the 8th, being St.

¹ P. 117.

George's day, at the annual festival of that valiant Order, the first toast, to the German Emperor, was given in the warmest terms by his illustrious nephew, who recapitulated his military services, and bore witness to his "unfailing friendship for Russia and for her sovereign."

Alexander II. had meantime, a few weeks only after the death of the Empress, married his mistress, the Princess Dolgorúkaya, by whom he already had children. At the end of 1880 I wrote that a novel means had been devised to prepare the public mind for the eventual recognition of the Princess not as Empress but as the wife of Russia's Sovereign. Word had been passed round amongst those connected with the Court that the marriage was no longer to be considered a secret by Russian society. The question then arose: In what sense was this to be taken; was society simply to utter aloud what it had so long babbled in secret, or mark its quasi-discovery of an event long known in some more visible way?

A little later I learnt that an Imperial ukase had been prepared, in which his Majesty graciously communicated to the Senate the fact of his marriage with the Princess Dolgorúkaya, or, as she was now called, Princess Yúrievskaya.¹ This document, which was not intended for publication, commenced with the words: "Having contracted a second legal marriage with the Demoiselle Princess Dolgorúkaya, etc.," and went on to define the position of the Princess and of her children. The latter, in accordance with Russian law, were legitimised by the fact of the parents' marriage, but were excluded from the succession to the Throne by an article in the code based upon an ukase of, I believe, the Emperor Paul, which also barred the recognition of their mother as Empress of Russia. The Emperor at this time used

¹ The masculine forms are Dolgorúky and Yúrievsky, as Peróvsky is of Peróvskaya, above. Perhaps it would be better in English to drop the feminine.

to drive daily, accompanied by his wife and surrounded by the usual escort of mounted Caucasians, to the Summer Garden, where the illustrious couple took their morning walk in such security as high railings and a vigilant police could give.

English Christmas Day, 1880, I spent at Vártemiaki, the other guests being General von Schweinitz, German Ambassador; General von Werder (then a sort of personal Envoy from the Emperor William to his august relative, later, ambassador); Count Nigra, Italian Ambassador; and Lord and Lady Dufferin. A fine large bear, unusually black, was shot by Pavel Pávlovich, being driven to him, as I saw, by arrangement between him and the keepers; but as neither Count Peter nor any other of his guests was aware of it no one was any the worse. The only time I ever saw my friend really angry was some months earlier, when he detected one of the same keepers in the act of taking me off to an inferior capercailzie "*tok*"¹ when he had told him to take me to the best, naming it—the man's object being, then as now, to keep the pick of everything for his young master. It was nothing to him that "*Piotr Andréich*" (Peter, son of Andrew) had taken over and paid for the whole of the shooting, including his own wages! Schouvalóff's anger was something painful to witness, but it was the only outburst of the kind I ever knew him guilty of, and the motive excused it.

We lunched in the woods, and I brought out unexpectedly, as my contribution, a real English plum-pudding, much to every one's amusement. That night I dined at the Embassy, and the constitution of the House of Lords coming under discussion Lord Dufferin said: "I

¹ See p. 241. *Tok* in Russian is from *Tokát*, to make a place smooth by beating, hammering, treading, etc., and is applied to the place so trodden to which the males of certain non-pairing birds, such as the capercailzie, black-game, snipe, ruff, crane, little bustard and others, call the hens in the breeding seasons and where they fight for them. Hence *tokorát*, to call in this way; morning or evening *tok*, the time or act of calling. Dahl, *Tolkóvui Slóvár jívavo* (pronounced *jívóva*) *Velikorúshkavo yaziká*, a great work.

am inclined to think that it would be by no means a bad move to modify it in some way." What a pity that he and those who thought with him failed to carry out their ideas !

It was on the above occasion that Schouvaloff uttered a warning to which I owed my early escape from fallacies which up to recent times have beset so many fervent admirers of the Russian people and more especially of the *mujik*. After the death of the bear we were for a few minutes surrounded by a crowd of peasants, not less than 200 men, women, and children, who had been employed as beaters. The majority were poorly clad, in dirty, ragged sheepskins, and much worn boots or *válenki*. Many were anaemic looking and of wretched physique, but the utmost good-humour prevailed. All were delighted with the success of the drive, and many a ribald jest passed at poor dead Bruin's expense, young and old chattering away like so many monkeys. Presently Count Paul, catching an old man by the ear, dragged him up to me, a twinkle in his eye, saying : "*Akh ti !* (Oh thou ! followed by a familiar but unprintable term of endearment) *shelma* (rascal). Look, Iván Ivánovich ! This fellow was my own serf, like all the rest of them, or their fathers—it's true, eh ? (pulling his ear). I could have sent him into the army, to Siberia, anywhere, and now he's as free as I am " (another pull). The man grinned "all over his face," inexpressibly pleased and proud to be thus noticed by his master, whose genial nature and reputation for gallantry in the field had made him very popular. The crowd laughed in sympathy, and I, fresh from reading panegyrics on the Russian peasantry, turned to my friend Peter, saying : "What delightful people ! Your *mujiks* are simply adorable !" "Yes," said my friend, "but make no mistake. They are all that their worshippers say of them, of their good-nature, their devotion, their soulfulness and all the rest of it ; but never forget that there is quite another side.

These very men—aye, and women, too—would if I passed the word that you were a Nihilist and had, possibly, taken a part in the recent attempts on the Tsar, set upon you and, literally, tear you to fragments.” He then quoted briefly the story of a wounded French soldier with wife and child caught by peasants during the retreat from Moscow. They first killed the man out of pity for his lamentable condition; next they could not bear to see the woman, wild with fear and grief, suffer so; and the same argument applied, of course, with double cogency to the case of the child. Thus all three were brained by the “kindly” peasants with their axes “out of pity.”

On many occasions in after years in various parts of the Tsar's wide empire, as well as in my reading, I came upon this other and darker side of the Russian peasants' nature. At Geok Tepë, in 1881, took place a three days' orgy of lust and massacre; in 1893, when the doctors were killed in the towns of the Lower Volga during a cholera epidemic, on a wild suspicion of spreading the disease, frenzied women jumped on their dead bodies and spat in their upturned faces; on the Amoor six thousand unarmed Chinamen were driven into the river and drowned in 1900. These are merely samples, and we have yet to learn the full truth about the Bolshevik Red Terror.

By the beginning of 1881 Skóbeleff's campaign against the Tekke Turkomans had become the one topic of conversation. Would it succeed; would it fail; might it not end in disaster? Amongst the Russians there were many who envied the young general, the popular hero, and protested that there were others to whom the command should rather have been entrusted. They hinted at rashness, inexperience, and were divided between the patriotic desire to see the Turkomans crushed, and a lurking hope of being able to say: “I told you so!” The foreign element in the Russian capital had, as a whole, no sympathy with Russia; and the English in

particular, so they honestly thought, no reason to wish her success in Central Asia.

The official organ of the War Office, the *Russki Invalid* (*Invalide Russe*), had a monopoly of the news, such as it was, which the press in general, there being no evening papers, copied twenty-four hours later. During December hardly a word came through, but it was known that the critical hour was at hand, and the public grew uneasy. It was only on the 13th January, 1881, that we learnt officially and very briefly what had been going on up to the 4th instant. Serious fighting began on the 23rd December, when a Russian transport train was attacked and the camels driven off, to be recovered soon after.

Skóbeleff, meanwhile, pushed on his command, taking and fortifying successively four minor posts, and a second time reconnoitred Geok Tepě. On the 20th December, Colonel Kuropatkin,¹ with a small force, arrived from the Amu Daria, after a hazardous march of four hundred versts. On the 1st January, Yangi Kalá, a fortified place, a mile or so to the south of Geok Tepě, was stormed, and on the following day a sortie from the latter stronghold was repulsed, after which a reconnoitring force was attacked so valiantly by the Turkomans that some of the latter were killed within ten paces, and Skóbeleff himself had to come up.

On the 4th the first parallel was drawn at eight hundred paces from Geok Tepě, but not without severe fighting, in which fell General Petrusévich. Another officer and nineteen men were killed, and some sixty were wounded. The Tekkes, who were aided by five thousand men from Merv, fought obstinately, and left three hundred bodies on the right flank alone.

On the 17th a telegram from Skóbeleff, dated the 11th, gave news of severe fighting on the two previous days. On the 9th, it appeared, at six in the evening, the Tekkes, to the number of thirty thousand, made a

¹Afterwards commander-in-chief in the Russo-Japanese war.

desperate sally on the troops engaged in the trenches—in all two thousand six hundred—and captured the advance works and part of the second parallel, which had meantime been constructed, taking four mountain guns and three mortars. The Russian reserve coming up, however, beat the enemy back, recapturing all but one gun, the Turkoman cavalry, which attacked the camp, being also repulsed. At seven in the morning, the Tekkes retreating, Skóbeleff ordered the trenches of the third parallel to be opened, and this operation was successfully concluded, in spite of a second sortie of the enemy. On the 10th Geok Tepě and its eastern out-works were bombarded, and the latter, situated at the distance of fifty paces only from the wall, were taken by storm. The Russian losses in the two days' fighting were two hundred and ten killed and wounded.

On the 19th we were given Skóbeleff's telegram of the 13th reporting a sortie two days earlier, which sounds like a repetition of the former one. A desperate fight resulted in a loss to the Russians of another mountain gun and a total of one hundred and fifty-four officers and men killed and wounded. It began to be whispered that Skóbeleff's position had become critical.

On the 23rd came his report that on the night of the 15th he had taken and was holding, though not without a struggle, a position only fifty yards from the walls, the enemy making the most determined efforts to dislodge the besiegers. Thus, on the evening of 16th the Tekkes had sallied out in force against the Russian centre and right flank, when a desperate hand-to-hand fight ensued all along the line, ending, however, in the repulse of the enemy. The further Russian loss up to the afternoon of the 17th was one hundred and seventeen killed and wounded.

The papers complained of the meagreness of the news from the seat of war and the unnecessary delay in its publication, the *Gólos* adding that reinforcements were absolutely necessary.

There followed a week of silence, during which, in the minds of patriotic Russians, suspense grew to anguish.

On the 26th I went after wolves with Schouváloff. Von Schweinitz was of the party, and drove with us in the Count's *troika*. Coming back we dropped him at the door of the German Embassy in the Great Morskáya. He had said good-bye and was moving towards the steps when, the hall-porter having spoken to him in a low voice, he turned back, and taking Schouváloff's hand again shook it vigorously, saying, "My *dear* Count, allow me to congratulate you most heartily. Skóbeleff has stormed and taken Geok Tepě!"

The victorious General's despatch dated 24th January, 1881, ran as follows:

"To-day, after nine hours' bloody fighting, the whole of the fortified positions known under the names of Geok Tepě and Denghel Tepě were taken by storm. The enemy took to flight along the whole line, and were pursued and cut up for a distance of fifteen versts. Our victory was complete. We have taken a quantity of guns, small arms, ammunition, the camp, and provisions. Will communicate our losses. Those of the enemy were immense. The troops bore themselves like heroes."

The unhappy Turkomans lost twenty thousand men in the siege and storming of their wretched fortress, in the subsequent merciless pursuit, and in the orgy of lust and rapine deliberately permitted to the troops for two and seventy hours by their commander-in-chief; for Skóbeleff, like Yermóloff before him in the Caucasus, believed that with Asiatics the only way was to deal them at once a smashing blow.¹ They would then in all

¹ In spite of denials by Mme. de Novikoff and others I can affirm on the authority of men who were there that on this occasion Skóbeleff, like Tilly at Magdeburg, gave his soldiers absolute freedom to work their will on the inhabitants during three days and nights. Soon after the expiry of this term the "White General" caught a favourite sergeant committing some criminal action, and had him shot out of hand, saying: "Three days I gave you—not one minute more!" Amongst the slain was Count Orlóff-Denísoff, Schouváloff's stepson.

probability give in and become loyal subjects of the Tsar ever afterwards. It is not always a safe rule to follow, never, of course, a right one; but on this and other occasions it gave the desired result. The Turkoman steppes, after centuries of lawless unrest, were at peace from the storming of Geok Tepë until the recent revolution.

CHAPTER V

Off after bears—Olónets—Religion and race—*Káleväla* and *builäni*—Captain Hamilton—Running down the lynx—Bears and squirrels—An awkward moment—Small-shot at a bear—The joys of *ski*-ing—Assassination of Alexander II.—France and Russia kept apart—Mélikoff's constitution—Mme. de Nóvikoff's views—The Tsar's funeral—Lord Dufferin and the Queen—Liberal and Slavophil—Count Valúyeff—Autocracy upheld—Slavophil triumph—Regicide trial—Horrors of an execution—Lord Dufferin leaves Russia—Anti-Jewish *pogróms*—Russo-Chinese treaty—Tsar and Kaiser at Danzig—King Humbert at Vienna—The Nihilist party—Count Kalnoky—Sarah Bernhardt—The *Jeannette*.

To visit not very distant places, connected with the capital by rail and telegraph, was one thing ; to disappear into the heart of the forest—a two days' journey by road from St. Petersburg and many hours drive from the nearest telegraph station—quite another. So that before starting on a bear-hunting expedition with an English friend to the Province of Olónets I applied for and obtained from Mudford leave of absence for three weeks. We set out on our journey due east on the afternoon of the 16th February, 1881, and, sledging all the way on difficult roads, reached our headquarters, Shimózero, late at night on the 18th.

Olónets is the Government or Province immediately east of Lake Ládoga ; it entirely surrounds Lake Onéga,¹

¹ See map at end of volume. English people, even some of those living in Russia, with singular obstinacy, persist in reversing the position of the accents in these two names, making them Ladóga and Onega.

and is made up almost wholly of water, bog and forest. It possessed, formerly, important iron-works at Petrozavódsck, where from the beginning of the eighteenth century cannon were cast for the Russian navy;¹ but its wealth, such as it is, consists now of timber, and the fur and food supplied by river, lake and forest. It is inhabited mainly by the Korels, a most ancient division of the Finnish race, who, on the southern borders of the Province, thanks to the fact that they were converted to Christianity by the Orthodox Russians and not, like their relations in Finland proper by the then Roman Catholic Swedes, are undergoing a gradual process of russification; and it would be difficult anywhere to find a clearer example of the all-important effect of religion on the absorption of an alien race. We had it thrust upon us, so to say, during our brief sojourn in the country south of Lake Onéga, where the old people spoke, preferably, Finnish, the younger generations used Russian with at least equal freedom, and their children in turn, in many cases, knew Russian only, whereas in Finland Russian never made the slightest progress. Further south still, in the Nóvgorod Government and on, perhaps to Moscow and beyond, the same process has been going on for centuries, and has resulted in the production of a race in which the Finnish element to a large extent disappears from view.

A strange survival of paganism amongst the Korels was the annual sacrifice of sheep and cattle in honour of St. Elias, and this on the shore of Lake Ládoga, within twenty miles of the famous island monastery of Valaam.²

¹ The Petrovski works (*zavód*), founded by Peter in 1703, were closed in 1721. The Alexandrovski works were opened in 1774, and lasted down to outbreak of the late war.

² *Tserkóvni Viestnik* (Church Messenger), Aug. 1885. Ilia (the prophet Elias) is held in great veneration in Russia, his feast being kept on July 20th (O.S.), our August 2nd, which is called 'thunder-bringing' (*grómo-nosny*), and like many another saint he carries on, doubtless, the traditions of some heathen idol—in his case Perun.

Owing to its geographical position and the harbourage it affords, Olónets, with its wide wastes of water and bear-haunted forests, can claim the unique distinction of having preserved for the world the epics of two widely different races. The Káleväla was mainly recovered by Lönrott from the Korelian Finns, and many of the Russian *builini*, of the Vladímir cycle, were likewise found there, amongst the descendants of Russian fugitives; so that, unpromising as the province might seem to anyone but a sportsman, it is second to no other in the whole Russian Empire in the value and importance of its historical and literary yield.

My companion and I were by no means the first Englishmen to hunt bears in Olónets. An officer in the Russian guards, Captain Hamilton, had some years previously made a reputation as an ardent sportsman, and especially as a runner on *ski*, after bears and other game. In the traditions of the British colony he was credited with having run down lynxes and even gluttons. From what I learnt in Olónets, from the men who had hunted with him, he had indeed run down many bears, and shown himself a sportsman of the best type; but my informants discredited the story of the gluttons, and seemed to think that of the lynxes at best doubtful. They themselves were famous hunters. Old Feódor, our chief henchman, had killed over a hundred bears, many with the spear alone. Matimián, another ancient, had a reputation second only to Feódor's, and both men were still tireless on their *ski*, and full of zeal and energy. They neither of them claimed to have run down glutton, one of the toughest of the beasts of the forest, about which quaint legends appear in old books and on early maps of Russia; but in favourable circumstances they had now and again run lynxes to a standstill and killed them with sticks; only, however, in companies of four men at least, who took in turn the arduous duty of "breaking" the track. Much, nearly everything, of course depends on

the condition of the snow. Matimián's son, Matían, a very fast runner in the prime of life, claimed, indeed, that he had once run a lynx to a standstill, alone. But hunter and quarry were equally exhausted. When the man stopped the beast stopped too; when either advanced a step the other followed suit. The distance between them dwindled at last to not more than ten or twenty yards, at one time even less. The beast, with tongue lolling out and eyeballs glaring, lay stretched on the snow, with head turned to his enemy, who, in no better plight, stooped with one knee and one hand resting on the *ski*, labouring for breath. Then slowly and painfully the lynx, with eyes that never left him, dragged himself away. Matían made a last effort to follow, but collapsed and fell. Victory remained with the beast: "And," said the man, "I was not sorry after all, for he deserved it! How I got home alive I hardly know. Had the cold increased or a snowstorm set in, death would have been certain."

Hamilton's ardour for the chase interfered considerably with his military duties. He often outstayed his leave or was away without any. But tradition has it that the Emperor favoured him, and intervened more than once to save him from the consequences of his escapades.

Others followed in Hamilton's tracks. Two of the Whishaws with a friend or so killed thirty-two bears in one expedition to Olónets not long before the time I am speaking of; and Lord William Compton,¹ with Alick Clark, a local Englishman, killed seventeen in February, 1880. So that the way was prepared before us, and we could in no sense be called pioneers. My friend ² and I in the course of twelve days' actual hunting killed twenty-three, of which eleven were cubs from one to two and even three years old, the rest grown bears

¹ Afterwards Marquis of Northampton.

² The Hon. Evelyn Hubbard.

of from four to sixteen *poods* (144 to 576 lbs.) weight. Unlike Russian sportsmen, who invariably adopted the *battue* system, driving the bear out on to the guns with the aid of from one to two hundred or more shouting, shrieking peasants—men, women and children—we and our predecessors took with us only our three or four hunters, with half a dozen dogs, and the "owner," *i.e.* the peasant who happened to have located the bear, which he usually does when the animal settles down to hibernate at the beginning of winter.

The dogs were of a smallish breed, resembling the "eskimo" or sledge-dogs. On the last day, when following hard on the tracks of our biggest bear, I chanced to get well ahead of the rest of the party. Presently the dogs began barking just in front of me, as I thought at the bear. To my disgust they had left the warm scent of that noble quarry to tree a squirrel. I was indignant until Feódor explained calmly that this was their proper function. Bear-running, after all, was the exception, squirrel-hunting a regular and important industry; and the dogs were trained to keep the frightened little creatures in one place by furious barking till the hunter came up and killed each one with a single pellet in the head—for a second charge would take away all profit, and a hole in the body diminish it not a little.

Old hands such as Feódor and Matimián made it their business to collect as many bear "owners" as possible, and then write or come to St. Petersburg and make arrangements with sportsmen willing to buy the right of killing the quarry at a definite scale of prices, generally so many roubles per *pood*. We paid only sixty roubles, then about five guineas, for our biggest; but some of the Grand-dukes followed us next year and spoilt both the market and the younger people, who became independent and grasping.

To show that, though frankly out for pleasure only, we benefited the peasantry by much more than the

money we spent, I will translate a few lines from a statement made on the occasion of our expedition in the Olónets *Official Messenger* :

"Owing to the want of good guns, the dearness of gunpowder, and the difficulty of obtaining it from the town stores, often from 100 to 300 versts distant from the villages, the peasants of the Province of Olónets are quite unable to contend successfully with the wild beasts—wolves and bears—which destroy yearly great quantities of their domestic animals. For instance in the six years 1874-1879 the losses amounted, in this Province alone, to 3,465 horses, 3,429 foals, 8,218 cows, 6,120 calves and 13,566 sheep, to an average yearly value of over 44,000 roubles."

The weather was, with one brief exception, ideal—no wind, a blue sky, and, what was vastly more important, snow in absolutely perfect "going" condition—a matter that only *ski*-runners can duly appreciate. We sometimes had to walk many miles to and from the *berlógas*, or lairs,¹ and the chase itself once or twice led us many more. After a while we even took to allowing the bears, purposely, a certain amount of law; for the depth of the snow and the good surface gave us an advantage in speed not always balanced by the difficulties opposed to our progress by hilly ground and the density of the forest. On one occasion we had failed to find the *berlóga*, and were on our way back to the sledges. I had given my gun to Feódor, and was gliding on alone, poking my staff under the snow-covered trunks and roots of fallen trees, calling out: *Mishka stavái, denghi davái*, as the peasant hunters do ("Michael, my honey; get up, give us money"), when out came a large she-bear, followed by three good-sized cubs. The white and solitary waste seemed suddenly to swarm with bears! I was unarmed,

¹ One is tempted to derive the first syllable from the German *bär*, there being no possible derivations in Russian, but the new edition of the *Dictionary of the Imperial Academy of Sciences*, vol. i. 1895, warns us that the same word in Serbian means a pig-stye! The rest of the word is Russian, from *ležát*, to lie down.

but luckily they made off towards Feódor, who soon saw them and hastily got my gun out of its leather cover. I slid down hill, snatched it from him on the run, crammed in two cartridges and blazed away at the mother-bear. She growled but went on. I loaded again and hit her hard with my right. This time she turned and I finished her with the left at less than ten paces. One of the cubs ran back and was killed by my companion, who, having heard the firing, was coming up fast from behind a wooded hill. I finished off the other two, feeling puzzled and ashamed at having had to fire four bullets at one bear at a distance of a few yards only. When we came to skin her the mystery was explained. In my hurry I had loaded—the first time—with cartridges containing No. 6 shot. I was still ashamed, but no longer puzzled.

I must explain that in Russia I shot all my game, big and small, with a Westley Richards 12-bore cylinder gun, using for bear and elk bullets cast by myself a little smaller than the bore, and sewn in bits of old white kid gloves well waxed. At anything up to fifty or sixty yards—and in forest shooting one seldom wants to fire further—nothing could have been more effective; and, of course, I had the additional advantage of using the weapon I was most accustomed to.

It was on this expedition that we discovered the joys of *ski*-ing, which my companion and I agreed in regarding as a pursuit in itself, to be cultivated in future quite irrespective of bears, wolves, lynxes or any other objects of the chase; indeed, the two Sundays, which to satisfy my companion's scruples we devoted to *ski*-ing up and down hill instead of to the pursuit of bears, were by no means the least agreeably spent of our fourteen days in the forests.

We drove into St. Petersburg on Friday night the 11th March in a state of joyous exhilaration, for we had had a most successful and delightful trip, and were now looking forward to bath, dress-clothes, a well-set dinner

table and welcoming friends, after three weeks roughing it in the wilds. We were in a country *kibítka*, or rough, hooded sledge, drawn by two scraggy ponies, hoary with snow and their own frozen steam and breath. On the quay, nearing the Winter Palace, we were stopped by mounted Cossacks, and roughly ordered to drive round the back way. We were annoyed, but my friend remarked consolingly: "Well, I suppose the Tsar is alive all right, and they are still guarding him." Less than two days later, on Sunday, the fatal 1st/13th of March, this ruler of millions lay dead, slain by a Nihilist bomb.

I had been luncheoning that day, with my late companion, on the Vásiili Island, and we had lingered afterwards, recalling incidents of the chase and recounting them to a party of friends, when about 3.30 p.m. a lady, who lived opposite and had been out driving, burst in upon us with the news. Within a few moments we were all, in one vehicle or another, on our way to the scene of the explosion. On arrival I found a good many people gathered, but as yet no crowd. Nearly every face bore the expression, in varying degree, of horror and grief, though a few seemed strangely indifferent. Many were on their knees, both men and women, weeping and praying; others were searching for relics and rubbing their handkerchiefs in the blood-stained snow. There was little noise—a sob, a groan, now and then a passionate exclamation, but for the most part people conversed in undertones or kept silent, overmastered by the horror of the deed.

The Emperor was in the habit, on leaving the *razvód* or Sunday review in the Michael *manège* (riding-school), of taking coffee with the Grand-duchess Catherine in the neighbouring Michael Palace, and then driving either down the short Catherine street to the Aníchkoff palace, on the Nevsky, to visit his son and heir, or by the equally short Michael street and the Catherine canal to the Winter Palace, in either case but a few minutes' drive.

The preparations made by the assassins bear witness to their grim and ruthless determination, and at the same time prove the criminal negligence of the police. The Catherine street had been mined from a basement butter-shop, and the mine remained undiscovered until after the assassination, although the authorities had received warning and had actually sent a general of engineers to make investigations. It was proved subsequently that when this officer made his enquiries of the butter-man, really Kóbezeff, a leading Nihilist, there was nothing but a board between him and the mine, at which a naval lieutenant was even then working. But he was satisfied with the answers given, and reported "all well." In case the Emperor went the other way, three men armed with dynamite bombs were waiting about under the direction of the woman Peróvskaya. On the fatal day at a signal from her that the victim was coming that way two of the three moved on to the canal embankment. Then, as the carriage passed, one of them, Risakóff, threw a bomb which exploded just behind it, partly shattering the woodwork and wounding several of the mounted Circassian escort. The Emperor got out, unhurt. The coachman implored him to get back into the carriage, declaring that he could perfectly well drive it home. But the Emperor, solicitous for the wounded, took a step or two towards the pavement on the canal side, where the assassin was being held by some of the Circassians; then, looking round and seeing that no one was killed, crossed himself, saying, *sláva Bógu* ("Thanks to God"). The assassin thereupon exclaimed, *yeshchó-li sláva Bógu* ("Is it thanks to God yet?"); and the Emperor having moved a few paces along the canal a beardless youth threw a bomb at his feet, mortally wounding himself and his victim. The Emperor, driven to the Winter Palace in a sledge, in the arms of his brother Michael, who had been following him at some distance, only partly recovered consciousness and died at 3.30. The murderer,

Grinevétsky, not identified as such for some days afterwards, died the same evening in hospital, whither he had been taken in the belief that he was a chance victim only, of the bomb. The third man, Emiliánoff, I met at Khabaróvsk on the Amoor in 1909—a mild intelligent grey-beard, who after years at the mines, had been set free. He had by a natural instinct run to the Emperor's help after the explosion of the second bomb.

The effect produced by this terrible event was, of course, immense; far greater, indeed, than would have been the case twelve months earlier, for then the many abortive attempts to kill the Tsar had compelled people to fear the worst, whereas of late there had been a lull in the terrorist proceedings, and the idea of danger had faded somewhat in men's minds.

Naturally, no sooner was the first shock over than people began asking what the new Emperor's policy would be at home and abroad. To take the latter first, I telegraphed on the 17th from undeniable sources the firm intention of Russia's new sovereign to adhere to the pacific policy which had marked the closing years of his father's reign, and to maintain and strengthen, if possible, the good relations that bound together the conservative courts of the Continent. Signs, indeed, were not wanting in the Russian press of a desire to embark upon a more adventurous policy, but those who counted upon any serious change in the grouping of the powers would be disappointed. This proved true during the earlier part, at least, of Alexander III.'s reign, though before the end of the year King Humbert's visit to Vienna, presaging the entry of Italy into the Austro-German alliance, set things in train for a *rapprochement* and eventually an alliance between France and Russia. It should be constantly borne in mind that, during many years, it was the radical nature of the Republican Government in France and the frequent internal dissensions that kept France and Russia apart.

As regards internal affairs, Mélikoff, for all we then knew, had, after a first spasmodic call upon the public for help, narrowed his *rôle*, as expected, to that of "high-policeman"; and as such, of course, had conspicuously failed—more especially in so far as mere measures of precaution were concerned. These could in no case have cured the disease of which Nihilism was but a symptom, but they might and should have sufficed to guard the Emperor's life.

It became known when already too late that with the Emperor's sanction the dictator had prepared a measure not, as Mme. de Nóvikoff puts it, "granting very large representative privileges to all classes"—if not a Constitution, a considerable step towards one—but merely instituting temporary commissions, like those organised in 1859, for the elaboration of reform proposals which were to be submitted to examination, amongst others, of persons taken from the *zemstvos* and some of the principal towns. The measure was to have been promulgated on the 6/18th March, five days only after the date of the assassination.

What success, if any, this Mélikoff "Constitution" might have had, it is, of course, impossible to say. My own opinion is that the Russia of that day wanted nothing more than to be governed with a firm hand, whatever the liberal professors and students, and the *intelligentsia* generally, might think or say to the contrary. As Joubert said, long ago, the natural demand of man is not liberty but justice, and it is only when justice is denied that liberty assumes in his eyes the position of supreme importance. I will go further and say that, in such a country as Russia—and even in some others—given justice at home and a guarantee against foreign aggression, the vast majority of the population would care not a rap for "liberty." But when autocratic government fails in both these respects, as it usually does, even the *moujik* begins to grumble.

Mme. de Nývikoff wrote at this time: "Aksákoff, Katkóff, and we all at Moscow insist upon the absolute monarchy which alone can work well in Russia. Heaven save us from a Constitution," and a little later she protested passionately that "Western Constitutionalism is so contrary to our views that it can only be recommended by Russia's bitter enemies. The Western forms have ruined Bulgaria, and in Russia everybody is convinced that those who pretend to be our good-wishers recommend their rotten liberties only because it would be fatal to our country"—a foolish and unjust accusation.

The funeral of the murdered Tsar was, of course, a most gorgeous and impressive sight. The body lay in state some days previously in the island church of St. Peter and St. Paul, while royalties and other distinguished persons were gathering in St. Petersburg from all parts of Europe and the nearer East; and one night Schouvalóff, being on guard in quality of Aide-de-camp General, took me in with him. A constant stream of people, mainly of peasant class, passed through, each in turn stopping to kneel and kiss the hand of the dead Tsar-emancipator, as I did, too, and with no little emotion; for, whatever his faults, that hand had struck the fetters from some forty millions of human beings.¹ On the day of the funeral, again, my friend drove me in his sledge through all the guards, and established me within the porch of the church in charge of a friend in high position.

Before leaving the Russian capital the Prince of Wales, on behalf of the Queen, invested the new Tsar with the insignia of the Order of the Garter. The ceremony took place, of course, in strict privacy, at the Aníchkoff Palace, only Lord Dufferin and some of his staff being present on our side. The Prince and Princess had come to

¹ The figure usually given—twenty millions—does not include the Crown, Church and some other serfs, who were, together, more numerous than those privately owned.

Russia on Lord Dufferin's responsibility, as he tells us himself :

" I was all in favour of the Prince coming, and of bringing his wife too. I knew that the risk though not absolutely nil (for no man can calculate on what these fanatics will do), was almost inappreciable, and considering what near relations our Royalties now are to those of Russia, and the fact that all the other princes of Europe were flocking to St. Petersburg, it would have looked very ill if a brother-in-law and sister had been deterred from coming by the fear of any personal risk. Consequently I telegraphed to the Queen in that sense, in spite of the responsibility. Her Majesty telegraphed back that she would hold me personally liable for any harm that might happen to either of them, which under the circumstances was not a very pleasant message." ¹

Nor, one might add, a very sensible one.

The exact truth about the short and sharp struggle that ensued, after the assassination, between the Liberals and the Slavophiles, each striving desperately to gain the ear of the new Emperor, has never been told. It lasted just two months, and the first open move was the publication on the 31st March of an Imperial *Povelénie* (Order) summoning a Council, to consist of elected representatives of the city of St. Petersburg " to put an end to the shameful development of the criminal activity of evilly-disposed persons, and save the capital from the disgrace of being the scene and the witness of such crimes as have been enacted there."

Though this " Order " came through the Ministry of the Interior, the measure was due solely to the new Prefect, Captain Baránoff of *Vesta* fame,² whose authority

¹ *Life*, vol. i. p. 321.

² During the Turkish war the *Vesta*, a small armed steamer under Baránoff's command, met a Turkish ironclad carrying a large body of troops to Batoum or elsewhere. Some shots were exchanged, but the Turkish commander rightly, perhaps, in the circumstances, refused to stop and fight his quite insignificant opponent. The Russians made a great to-do over their " victory," and St. George's crosses were freely bestowed.

for the nonce took the place, so far as concerned the capital, of Mélikoff's. The Council was to be presided over by him, and he alone had the right of proposing measures for adoption. On the other hand, any measure not voted by a majority of the Council would be ruled out.

Critics were not wanting who asked why the city should not be represented by the existing Municipal Council? Others shrugged their shoulders and said, "We know well enough what this sort of measures leads to in Russia!" There can be no doubt, however, that the above was an attempt, however slight, in the direction of representative government, though it was scarcely a happy augury for the future that it should take the form of a police measure. As most people expected, nothing whatever came of it.

About a month later it became known that the Emperor would hold a Council at Gatchina on the 4th May, at which, so it was rumoured, vitally important decisions would be taken. On the 5th, towards evening, I received information according to which, as a result of this meeting, it was intended to constitute the Ministers into a Cabinet presided over by one of their number whom they should themselves select, with the object of giving greater unity and solidity to the Administration. All reports and projects of individual ministers were to be presented to the Emperor only after discussion by the Cabinet, as a whole, instead of, as heretofore, directly and independently to his Majesty. This, again, would be a step and an important one towards Constitutional Government. Further, there were to be various rules framed with the object of securing harmony, as, for instance, that a Minister who brought forward proposals three times without obtaining the support of his colleagues should resign. It was stated, even, that the Emperor, who—so it was said—presided at this meeting, was anxious that the President of the Cabinet should be elected forthwith, and that, in deference to his wish, all present

wrote down two names, the majority being for Generals Mélikoff and Miliútime.

Assuming for the moment that this information was correct, Alexander III. must have decided to give his casting vote in favour of constitutional reform as advocated by the Liberal triumvirate—Mélikoff, Miliútime, Abazá. The importance of the news, if true, needs no emphasising; but *was* it true? It came from a good source, yet a tainted one—the Liberal press, and notably the office of the *Gólos*. I had been led to expect exactly the reverse, and my informants were worthy of confidence. Yet so positive were my new purveyors that I was puzzled to know what to think, what to do.

I had said good-bye to Schouváloff, who, as it happened, was leaving at 7 p.m. for Ruthenthal. It was already half-past six. I drove to the station, struggled down a crowded platform, found him and told what I had heard. He suggested, smiling, that it was meant for foreign consumption, people in Russia knowing perfectly well that such debates as were said to be taking place at Gatchina were incompatible with the forms of Russian Government. "*Vpróchem* (however), I have no direct information on the subject, and at a time like this anything might happen. I'll tell you what"—taking out a visiting card and writing upon it—"go to Valúyeff, and send this in. He *must* know, and will certainly tell you."¹ The train moved off, and I drove straight to Valúyeff, who still inhabited the ministry of Imperial domains on the west side of the Marie Square. He received me at once, I explained what had happened, and he said: "I am very glad indeed that you have come to me. All this is absolutely untrue; it is made up with a purpose, and you can judge of the lengths to which

¹ Valúyeff, a man with liberal leanings who had already as Minister of the Interior played a great part in Russia, was named President of the Committee of Ministers on January 1st, 1880, but his advice was overruled.

these people are prepared to go when I tell you that the account published in an English paper three weeks ago of the proceedings at a Council of Ministers was a mere fabrication, the speeches attributed to me and to others never having been uttered by us and having, indeed, come to our knowledge only three weeks after the meeting—very much to our surprise.” “Then, your Excellency, I may confidently telegraph to that effect?” “Most certainly. I even beg you to do so.”

This, of course, was “good enough.” I sent at one and the same time the news and its refutation, whereas one of my colleagues, in the most perfect good faith, transmitted it as simple truth. For a few days more the struggle continued; but either the Emperor’s mind had been made up all along, or, as some say, he was won over by Pobyedonóstseff to the side of reaction. In any case, on the 10th May he passed in review the whole of the troops of the St. Petersburg military district, and issued a proclamation stating categorically his determination to rule Russia after the manner of his predecessors. “In the midst of our great sorrow,” so ran the Proclamation, “the voice of God commands us to take firmly in hand the duty of Government, in reliance on God’s Providence, and faith in the strength and verity of Autocratic Power, which we are called upon to confirm and preserve for the public good against all attacks.”¹

On my original specimen of this historical document, which I still have by me, I wrote at the time: “Mélikoff, Miliútine, Abazá, etc., received no intimation that this would be issued. Nabókoff (Minister of Justice) brought them a copy at 4 a.m. on Wednesday (10th May). The semi-official *Agence Russe* and the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* translated *Samoderjávnyaya vlast* by ‘*pouvoir souverain*’ instead of ‘Autocratic power.’ This version

¹ Katkóff’s commentary on this re-affirmation of limitless arbitrary power was very characteristic: “We can now breathe *freely*.”

was Valúyeff's, who did not dissent when I pointed out the mistake to him and hinted that it was done on purpose."

The Liberal game was up. The Emperor entrenched himself at Gatchina. Mélikoff and Miliútine were allowed to resign their portfolios and retire, the first abroad, the second to the Crimea. Ignátieff became Minister of the Interior, and, for a time, all-powerful. The Slavophil party triumphed.

To this day I do not know how much truth, if any, there was in the elaborate description of Councils held by the Emperor at which apparently he showed himself ready to follow the lead of the Liberal ministers. If true at all Valúyeff lied shamelessly, and the Emperor vacillated in a way to which all else that we know of him runs counter. On the whole, it seems likely that the information was largely made up for transmission abroad in the hope that foreign approval might influence the Emperor in favour of the desired reforms.

Be this as it may, Russia now settled down, without overmuch murmuring, to five and twenty years of unmitigated autocracy.

Meantime I had been present at the trial of six of the regicides, the front row of the public seats being reserved for the press, including foreign correspondents—their first official recognition in Russia. On this bench, besides the correspondents of the English, French, German and Dutch papers, I recognised Constantine Makóvsky, the painter, famous for his renderings of old Russian costume; Krayevsky, owner of the *Gólos*; and General Bogdanóvich.¹ The space behind was occupied by a crowd of military and civil officers in uniform. I wrote:

"Suddenly the prisoners' door opens and every face is turned that way. The accused enter in single file, each preceded by a gendarme with naked sword, and they step into

¹ See p. 375.

the dock. First comes Risakóff, a beardless youth, of erect figure; but ill-featured, with sandy hair, small eyes and a sullen mouth, which all his efforts cannot keep from twitching. He is followed by Mikháiloff—tall, defiant, brutal. The next is Hesse Helfmann, a Jewess of pronounced type—short, dark, and—what is strange—with no pretension either to good looks or to intelligence. To her succeeds Kibálchich, the 'Technic,' a somewhat dirty-looking individual, grey-bearded, and with hair falling over his forehead. One could well fancy such a man working in a locked-up room, with a revolver at hand, preparing his diabolical engines. Sophie Peróvskaya sits beside him. Contrary to report she is not pretty, but quite the type of the female nihilist, with high, massive forehead, straight hair, nose turned up, a firm mouth, and a pointed chin. Jeliáboff, who is the last to enter, attracts much attention by his fine, tall figure, handsome dark brown beard, strongly-marked but regular features, high forehead, bright eye, and generally proud, determined air. The accused raises his eyes to the wall above, where, draped in black, hangs a full-length portrait of the murdered Emperor, who seems to look down sadly upon his assassins and upon all the paraphernalia of law, justice, and military power which were unable to protect him in life."

Lord Dufferin's characterisation of the accused was even less favourable:

"I looked in," he wrote, "at the trial of the Nihilists. One of the men was very distinguished looking, with a countenance of a high type. The others were merely moujiks, one woman a disreputable looking Jewess, and Peroffsky (*sic*), the lady, a bosomless, sexless creature of the true Nihilist type with a huge forehead, small intelligent eyes, and a hideous face."¹

There could be no question as to the result of the trial, which was conducted throughout in public and with conspicuous fairness. All six were condemned to death. Helfmann's sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life, she being *enceinte*; the others were hanged on the 15th April, a horrible sight—in the case of Mikháiloff

¹ *Life*, vol. i. p. 322.

the rope broke *twice*—which I felt justified in sparing myself.

Lord Dufferin left the Russian capital, finally, on 15th April. In passing through Berlin he spent an hour with Bismarck, and in conversing with him observed that one of his first duties on reaching Constantinople would be to deal with the Armenian question. Was that a subject that would engage his sympathies? "He gave me to understand that it was one in regard to which Germany would feel no very great concern." Four days after arrival in England Lord Dufferin attended Lord Beaconsfield's funeral at Hughenden. On June 4th he left for Constantinople.¹

The rest of the year was signalised by lamentable anti-Jewish riots—*pogróms*—in Poland, Kieff and the south of Russia generally, which, owing to movements of protest in London, reacted somewhat unfavourably on Anglo-Russian relations.

There was also a mission from Persia, where, as a result of Skóbeleff's victory and the skilful use made of it by Zinóvieff, minister at Teheran, Russian influence had become paramount; a deputation of Tekkes, including, significantly enough, some from Merv; and a visit of the British reserve squadron, under command of the Duke of Edinburgh. In August the Tsar paid a visit to Moscow, whither I preceded him; and Skóbeleff, arriving suddenly from abroad, was very graciously received, in private audience, in the Kremlin.

The Marquis Tseng, who was accompanied by Sir Halliday Macartney, now concluded the Treaty of St. Petersburg, which replaced that of Livadia. Macartney wrote me on the 17th August:

"I have been authorized to comply with your request to the extent of giving you a copy of the Treaty of St. Petersburg. As for the Treaty of Livadia, the Minister thinks that as it was never ratified and the publication of it might possibly be

¹ *Loc. cit.*

distasteful to the Russians, the less said about it the better. If you call here at 11 o'clock to-morrow I will put you in a position to copy the treaty of St. Petersburg."

I copied the Treaty, by which China recovered possession of all but an unimportant strip of territory, together with the Muzart Pass, and sent it to the *Standard* on the 18th; and on the 23rd I gave a dinner at Donon's to introduce Macartney to our new *chargé d'affaires*, Hugh W. Wyndham.

In September all Europe was taken by surprise when the Emperor suddenly left Peterhof for Dantzic, accompanied by M. de Giers, Count Vorontsóff-Dashkoff, Admiral Boutakóff and General von Werder,¹ to meet the Emperor William and Prince Bismarck (10th September). This put Russo-German relations once more on a friendly footing; but at the beginning of November came King Humbert's visit to Vienna, preluding Italy's entrance into the Alliance of the Central Powers.² This visit gave offence in Russia, and deepened that mistrust of Germany already forming in the Emperor's mind, and destined eventually to have incalculable results.

Disclosures made in the course of the second great regicide trial in November enabled people for the first time to trace clearly the origin and execution of the daring attempts which resulted in placing an empire of over eighty millions of people in a "State of Siege," and struck all the civilised world with awe and astonishment. For the first time we who followed events on the spot were in a position to draw a tolerably accurate

¹ Von Werder was German military plenipotentiary at the Russian Court. Through him the two sovereigns maintained constant communication independently of their ambassadors or their chancellors, to Bismarck's extreme annoyance. Once, at least, he made a strenuous effort to secure von Werder's recall—but in vain. See his *Recollections and Reminiscences*, London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1898, vol. ii. p. 228.

² The new Triple Alliance—Germany, Austro-Hungary and Italy—was signed 20th May, 1882, but was first announced by Mancini in the Italian Chamber on 13th March, 1883.

picture of the state of the Socialist party, and lay bare the organisation of that section of it which, by its deeds of blood, had but too well earned the right to its self-bestowed title of Terrorist. Step by step we could follow the struggle between the Government and its hidden foes, estimate the force at the disposal of each, and realise fully, as things then were, the hopeless and, therefore, criminal nature of all attempts to overthrow the existing order of things in Russia. The Nihilists never represented more than an infinitesimal portion of the population of the Russian Empire.

Count Kalnoky left St. Petersburg on the 5th December after presenting his letters of recall. His appointment as successor to Baron von Haymerle,¹ Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, relieved to some extent the tension caused by the Italian visit, and, even more, by the current report that Count Andrassy was to have that post.

One result of the anti-Jewish movement was reported by me as follows, under date 21st December, 1881, after an interview with the fair lady :

" Sarah Bernhardt appeared last night in *La Dame aux Camélias*, and met with a very cold reception, partly due to the fact that the St. Petersburg public thinks much more about who the actress is than how she acts ; and partly to the shameful fleecing which most of the audience had undergone in the long process of obtaining seats. It was not until the end of the piece that the applause became general. The patriotic *Nóvoe Vrémya* remarks that the coldness shown by the public does it honour.

" Mdme. Bernhardt is, however, a woman of spirit, and she expresses the hope that she may yet thaw the Russian snow. She related with much vivacity how, at Odessa, the Jews pelted her with cucumbers for being a Christian, while the Christians stoned her for being a Jewess.

¹ Haymerle was one of the leading rebels against Austria in 1848. Sentenced to death for high treason he was rescued by a friend when on his way to execution, and eventually became Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister.

"From St. Petersburg the great actress goes to Warsaw, where her reception will probably compensate her for the patriotic indifference and religious antipathy she has met with in Russia."

About this time we learned from Siberia the moving story of the loss of the *Jeannette*, American arctic exploring ship, and the sufferings of her crew.

CHAPTER VI

Sir Edward Thornton—M. Lessár in Central Asia—Skóbeleff's first speech—Aksákoff and the Bosnian rising—Skóbeleff's second speech—Mme. de Nóvikoff's appreciation—The Tsar and Skóbeleff—The threat to European peace—Katkóff, Bismarck and Germany—Mme. de Nóvikoff and Bismarck—Schouváloff's justification—Retirement of Prince Gortchakóff—De Giers Foreign Minister—Dmitri Tolstoy Minister of the Interior—Anti-Jewish riots—I visit England—The Phoenix Park murder—Gallantry Bower—Death of General Kaufmann—Skóbeleff and Sir Henry Rawlinson—Lessár at Herat—Death of Skóbeleff—Russia and the bombardment of Alexandria—The *Standard* re-enters Russia—Stoliétoff's mission to Kabul—Death of Gambetta.

ON the 10th January, 1882, Sir Edward Thornton, the new Ambassador, held his first official reception, which was, as a matter of course, brilliantly attended. These affairs were well managed in Russia. The object being to introduce the new foreign representative to Russian court and official circles, it was the Grand Chamberlain's office that gave the list of invitations to be sent out to Russian subjects. The diplomatic corps was invited, as a matter of course, *au grand complet*; and beyond that the Ambassador was at liberty to suggest the names of personal non-Russian friends, amongst whom I already counted.

A few days later news came from Askhabad of the arrival there of M. Lessár, a Russian engineer, who later on played a diplomatic *rôle* of no slight importance. A short time previously there had been a rumour that he and his convoy of twenty Cossacks had been attacked by six thousand Mervites on their way to harry Persian

villages. One hundred Cossacks and a company of infantry went to the rescue, fearing to be too late. To their astonishment, however, instead of meeting hostile forces, they fell in with a deputation from Merv, consisting of sixty persons, who received them in the most friendly manner, and, through the medium of the (Akkal) Tekkes, who were present, commercial relations of a kind were soon established. Various articles of Merv manufacture, such as carpets, were already finding their way to Askhabad, as likewise horses and cattle, the latter in sufficient number to supply the whole Russian camp. Even workmen from Merv came uninvited and hired themselves out to work on the fortresses in process of erection.

On 26th January the *Nóvoe Vrémya* added the interesting information that Lessár was engaged in surveying the country between Askhabad and Herat, and had actually accomplished the work as far as Sarakhs, within a few versts of the Afghan frontier. This could have but one meaning, that Russia had in view the possibility of a further advance, which, of course, was only to be expected.

With the news I sent the following summary of the first of Skóbeleff's famous speeches, which remained otherwise unnoticed for some days; and, indeed, neither I nor any one else in St. Petersburg had any idea what a stir it would make in the world. I believe no other correspondent so much as mentioned it until several days later.

"General Skóbeleff, speaking at a dinner given on Tuesday in honour of the anniversary of the taking of Geok Tepé, referred not only to the little war so brilliantly conducted by him last year, but to Russia's position in regard to the rest of the Slavonic race. He protested against the cosmopolitanism of the educated classes in Russia, and declared, amongst other things, that an extreme mistrust of everything foreign and capable of destroying the lawful historical ideals of the Fatherland was a patriotic duty. Referring to the Slavs of Illyria, he complained that whenever a Russian ventured to remember that he was of the same race as those

now persecuted and condemned, his views were scouted abroad, and his utterances set down to the influence of abnormal excitement. Russian society itself seemed to be paralysed by some strange timidity in regard to this question, so lawful and natural to every Russian heart, and the reason of this was the unfortunate difference existing between the educated classes and the people. The latter had never failed their Tsar when called upon ; but the same could not be said of the former. In conclusion, General Skóbeleff reminded his hearers, in feeling terms, that at this moment on the shores of the Adriatic a struggle was going on for race and faith, and broke off with these words—"I make no end, gentlemen—my heart is oppressed ; but our great consolation is our faith in the genuineness and strength of Russia's historical mission."

The *Nóvoe Vrémya*, which at this time was very closely in touch with General Ignátieff, printed Skóbeleff's long speech in full, thus proving that the Emperor's nearest advisers stood ready sponsors to the Moscovite champion. But no great attention was excited at the moment, and the incident was in a fair way to being forgotten when a fortnight later Aksákoff's *Rus* printed an article on the Bosnian rising, which was rightly characterised by the *Gólos* as a call to arms against the enemies of the Slav race, that is to say, against Austria and her backer, Germany.

"The Austrian campaign against the Herzegovinians, Bosnians, and indirectly also against Montenegro," wrote the celebrated Slavophil leader, "is a campaign against us. Every drop that is shed of Slavonic blood will leave a stain upon our conscience and call for vengeance. What is to be done in these circumstances ? Is Russia to stand by, with indignation in her heart and the blush of shame on her face, while the Slavs are forced under the hated yoke of Latin, German or Suabian ? Or shall she take quite another line ?"

The effect of this was to renew and intensify the feelings of alarm and dissatisfaction which had begun to subside, feelings particularly noticeable in official and diplomatic circles. Then on the 17th February came the Paris bombshell, Skóbeleff's second "speech."

What he did or did not say anyone who cares to investigate the subject may endeavour to gather from Mme. de Nóvikoff's voluminous and, if I may say so, involved explanations.¹ Avowedly he made no set speech in the terms published in *La France*, but he allowed himself according to Aksákoff, to be persuaded "not to deny the words attributed to him, words which had already spread like wildfire, and awakened the dormant patriotism of France." He also allowed himself to receive the thanks of Gambetta, who said :

"The speech has already done great good ; it has filled all hearts with patriotic ardour, and rouses hopes of a Franco-Russian alliance. *Cela a pris comme une trainée de poudre*. Look at these telegrams I have just received from Havre and Marseilles. The fleet and army are wild with enthusiasm ; but I warn you that in my paper I shall have to condemn the want of tact shown by General Skóbeleff, out of political caution, and so as not to appear a party to its utterance."²

Here is the "speech" in Mme. de Nóvikoff's version. No wonder it set passions ablaze :

"I need hardly tell you, my friends, how deeply I am moved by the warm manifestations you have indulged in. I assure you that it is true happiness to me to see around me the youthful representatives of Serbia—of that nation which was the first to raise the standard of Slav liberties in the East, which is the birthright of the Slavs. It is my duty to speak to you frankly. I shall not shrink from that duty. I am bound to tell you the reason why Russia is not always equal to the discharge of her patriotic duties in general, and to the fulfilment of her mission as a Slav Power in particular. It is because at home as well as abroad Russia has foreign influences to contend against. We are not the masters in our own house. Yes, the foreigner is everywhere and everything in Russia. His hand is in all our affairs. We are

¹ *Skobeleff and the Slavonic Cause*, by O. K., London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1883, chap. iii.

² *Rus*, Jan. (before the 18th), 1883. My translation published in the *Standard* at the time is, apparently, that used by Mme. de Nóvikoff.

dupes of his policy, victims to his intrigues, slaves to his strength; and from his baneful influence we can only be delivered by the sword. And shall I tell you the name of that intriguing intruder—of that oppressor of Russians and Slavs? You all know him. It is the author of the 'Drang nach Osten.' It is the German. I repeat it, and entreat you never to forget it—the German is the enemy. A struggle is inevitable between the Teuton and the Slav. It cannot be long deferred. It will be long, sanguinary, and terrible, but I entertain the faith that it will culminate in the victory of the Slav. It is quite natural that you should be anxious to know how matters stand, since your kith and kin are even now shedding their blood. I will not say much, but I can assure you that if any one ventures to touch the States recognised by European treaties, such as Serbia and Montenegro, you shall not be left to fight alone. Once more I thank you, and if fate wills it, we may meet again on the battlefield, shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy!"¹

Mme. de Nóvikoff's way of presenting this to her readers is eminently skilful, characteristic and—dare I say?—feminine.

She says: "Here is the famous forgery which at first I was very loth to reproduce even as such; but as *Skóbeleff has declared it to be a tissue of fabrications*² I give it in a footnote." A curious reason for publishing a forgery! By implication, had Skóbeleff *not* declared it a tissue of fabrications she would have yielded to her first impulse and left it unpublished. And the choice of words is admirable: "tissue of lies" or "of falsehoods" would have left no doubt in our minds; "tissue of fabrications" at first sight means the same. But a moment's reflection shows that while the "speech" as such was fabricated, the material for the most part was undoubtedly genuine, and a tissue, after all, is a fabric, whether woven of gold or of tinsel.

The *Official Messenger* published at once a foolish disclaimer, calling the "speech" a "private utterance of no importance," but Skóbeleff was recalled, and left

¹ *Skobeleff and the Slavonic Cause*, p. 283. ² The italics are my own.

Paris on 23rd February. He was met on arrival in St. Petersburg by a small but enthusiastic crowd, I amongst them, and we learned that he had received *en route* many tokens of German ill-will in the form of threatening letters and even challenges. These menaces were treated with contempt by the White General, who seemed by no means dissatisfied with the effect produced by his very frank utterances. He was received in audience at Gatchina on the 11th March, but how was never made public. His friends declared that the Emperor so far from displaying annoyance at the plain speaking of his general, assured the latter of his secret sympathy, nay! fell upon his neck and kissed him. His enemies, on the other hand, or rather the friends of peace, said that this hero of the recent crusade against the Germans was severely reprimanded. All that was absolutely known was that Skóbeleff had a private interview with the Emperor, and left the audience chamber with tears in his eyes—tears of joy, said his friends, of mortification, his enemies. Certain it is that he soon recovered himself, and evinced once more that aptitude for getting into trouble, which was at this time, apparently, his peculiar characteristic. Invited to a dinner given by officers of the horse-grenadier regiment, which served under him in the war, and to which he was much attached, he in turn invited them to dine with him in town, proposing that they should ride up from, I think, Gatchina in cavalcade on the 10/22nd March, the *German Emperor's birthday*, to Donon's,¹ passing on the way the windows of the German Embassy. The commanding officer took the precaution of asking beforehand what was thought of the matter by the higher authorities, and, acting upon advice, that in fact amounted to instruction, refused permission for the projected demonstration.

The true significance and danger of all this, as I pointed out at the time, lay not so much in Skóbeleff's utterances

¹ Donon's in those days was the best restaurant in St. Petersburg.

as in what lay behind them, the fact, namely, that Skóbeleff himself, though perfectly sincere in all that he said, was, after all, but the agent of other and more dangerous agitators, whose sagacity never showed to greater advantage than in their choice of him as spokesman. Europe understood, of course, perfectly well that it was threatened from the same source with a greater danger than that which convulsed it in 1876, but the careful distinction often drawn between official and non-official Russia showed that one of the most important elements in this conspiracy against the general peace was either unknown or insufficiently considered. If by official Russia was meant M. de Giers, no doubt his assurances on the subject of Russia's foreign policy left little to be desired, but de Giers's own position was at that time precarious. He was *de facto* in possession of the Foreign Office, but not yet Foreign Minister; nor, if the Slavophiles had their way, would he ever be confirmed in that vitally important post. General Ignátieff was striving his utmost to obtain the direction of Russia's foreign affairs in succession to Prince Gortchakóff, and his endeavours seemed about to be realised when the Dantzic interview, arranged and carried out without even his cognisance, dashed hopes necessarily based upon hostility between Russia and Germany. The danger was still great, for this disappointment, added to the increasing difficulties of the internal situation, drove Ignátieff, already the tool of the Slavophil leaders, to whom his elevation was due, to embrace their project of a renewed agitation, for which the rising in Illyria gave a singular opportunity. In doing so he must have counted upon the disturbance that would take place in Europe, and the pressure that would be brought to bear in Russia by the popular prejudice and passion thus wilfully excited. The Emperor, it was thought, would then be forced either to wash his hands of the whole movement and thereby risk a further loss of

popularity, which he could ill afford, or take his place at the head of it, in which case General Ignátieff would become the wielder of Russia's destinies, and hostile relations between Russia and Austria, at least, would be inevitable.

Alexander III., however, whatever his feelings may have been, refused to allow himself to be dragged into an European war, and the Skóbeleff incident, though not forgotten, ceased to be an immediate danger, the more so that the Emperor William's birthday, 23rd March, was made the occasion of a demonstration more significant than the usual Imperial dinner and congratulations upon which, in form, it was a mere comment. In Katkóff's paper, the *Moscow Gazette*, to every one's astonishment, appeared a long article from his own pen breathing good-will to Germany, and actually defending that country and Prince Bismarck for their past policy, and putting all blame for misunderstandings and for the losses and humiliations of the Berlin Treaty on Russia herself.

"If the German Chancellor found not so much as one German interest in Constantinople, we on our part—can it be believed?—before the outbreak of the war in the East imagined that we had an important Russian interest in Rome, in the Vatican! This is the literal truth. It was this circumstance which deterred us from coming to an understanding with Germany, at that time engaged in the 'Kulturkampf' with the Vatican. We found that that war interfered with freedom of conscience, and were not prepared on this account to side with Bismarck.

"And thus, not the cunning machinations of the 'honest broker,' but our care for the Russian interests bound up with those of the Papal Curia, and our dread of disturbing the balance of power in Europe—this was why during the war we were obliged to look around on all sides; this was why our armies did not occupy Constantinople for a time; this is the reason why in Berlin we had to stand at the bar of the accused."¹

¹ *Skobelev and the Slavonic Cause*, p. 297.

This article Mme. de Nóvikoff, writing next year, quoted at length with full approval and reinforced in her own incisive way. The enemy is Austria, not Germany, . . . Germany misunderstood, Germany, personified in Prince Bismarck, is Russia's best friend.

"I hardly think *that*" (*i.e.* Katkóff's article) "justifies the accusation so frequently brought against the Moscovites, that we are Germanophobes. Fortunately there is no reason why we should be enemies; on the contrary, all our reasons are in the other direction.

"This is luckily also the conviction of Prince Bismarck, whose declaration in the Reichstag (was) that 'Germany having been connected with Russia for many years by the ties of a sincere and mutually profitable alliance, he for one would think twice before giving up the friendship of so great and powerful a State without real necessity.'

"That 'real necessity' has not arisen, and is not likely to arise." ¹

Incidentally this whole chapter in Mme. de Nóvikoff's book, *Skobelev and the Slavonic Cause*, supplies a full defence of Schouváloff. If it was wrong in him to have confidence in Bismarck and to trust German friendship—I do not say it was not, I cannot pretend to judge—it was at least equally wrong in Katkóff, Mme. de Nóvikoff and Schouváloff's friend and master, Alexander II. In these later times, again, we have the categorical declaration in favour of Bismarck and his policy by M. Miliúkov printed at the beginning of this book. If that declaration represents anything like the truth Schouváloff was right, and the obloquy cast upon him must be thrown back upon his detractors.

Early in April Prince Gortchakóff ² at length retired. The post of Chancellor fell into abeyance, and not General Ignátieff, but mild, prudent M. de Giers was appointed Foreign Minister, to the disappointment in Russia and elsewhere of a small minority of people, who for one

¹ *Skobelev and the Slavonic Cause*, p. 298.

² Alexander Mikailovich, born 1798.

reason or another wanted war—to the great relief of the peaceable majority throughout Europe. Before mid-summer Ignátieff had resigned his portfolio, and returned into private life, being succeeded as Minister of the Interior by Schouvaloff's personal friend, Count Dmitri Andréyevich Tolstoy.

Meantime, on February 2nd, I had sent the first public intimation that on the 20th (22nd) of December a Treaty had been signed at Teheran by the representatives of Russia and Persia for the settlement of the Central Asian frontier common to both Powers. By the terms of this Treaty Russia received the whole of the Akhal Tekke oasis, to within sixteen versts of Sarakhs, which town, however, remained in the hands of Persia. Part of the ceded territory in the Atrek district was to be held by the Shah for five years, and to be free of all imposts. The Treaty was to be ratified within three months of the date of signature.

It seemed, therefore, that the Russians, in surveying the country almost to Sarakhs, as they had done, were only taking a preliminary survey of their new possessions. It was evident, however, that in future they would have to see to it that bodies of Merv Tekkes in numbers large or small did not cross their territory to kill, ravage or enslave the loyal subjects of the Shah, as heretofore.

The anti-Jewish rioting in the south and west continued throughout the first half of the year, greatly exciting public opinion in France and England, and in this matter, again, it is difficult to exonerate Ignátieff from a large measure of blame.

I went home on leave for a few weeks in April, and spent part of the time on the North Devon coast. Two things deeply impressed me, and—as I recall them—glow in my mental vision as two blotches of vivid colour, one blood-red, the other golden-yellow. Walking along the cliff road near Ashley Coombe with my younger

brother, we met a man evidently under the influence of some overmastering, horrifying impression. He stopped and asked us abruptly: "Have you heard the news?" "No, what news?" Then he told us of the barbarous murder of Mr. Burke and Lord Frederick Cavendish. A week later I saw the gorse in bloom on the windy slope leading up to the cliff-edge at Gallantry Bower.

At this time, May 1882, died General Kaufmann, Russia's great pro-consul in Asia. He enjoyed the happiness of living just long enough to witness the successful completion of his life's work. For all Central Asia was now Russian, or practically certain to become so in the near future, up to the Chinese, Afghan and Persian borders. His ambition, perhaps, extended further, but his actual achievement was great, and it included all that Russia could with safety and advantage embrace.

There was a lull for the moment in Anglo-Russian recriminations, but mischief was brewing. Sir Henry Rawlinson's views had already proved wrong in important particulars; his knowledge was great and his judgment in general no less sound than sober; but he exaggerated the danger to Herat and consequently to India should Russia get possession of Merv;¹ and, on the other hand, greatly over-estimated the difficulties Russia would encounter in the process of absorbing the Uzbek Khanates² and the territory of the Tekke Turkomans. In regard to the latter, Skóbeleff, in his St. Petersburg speech, summarised Sir Henry's views as follows:

"The animosity of the Tekkes (according to Sir Henry) would involve Russia for many years in enormous expenditure of men and money, and in a war which would render it obligatory on Russia to establish a cordon of forts from the South of the Attrek and through the entire oasis and from the Attrek

¹ *England and Russia in the East*, London, p. 344.

² *Ibid.* p. 346.

to Merv. To crown all, it would undermine the political power of Russia in Central Asia ! ”

Meantime Russia had kept her word. Skóbeleff, his work accomplished, had been recalled and the Mervites left to their own devices, which gradually and surely led them into the welcoming arms of Russia, who, by peaceful means, did all she could to consolidate and extend her military gains. We have seen that Lessár, in January of this year, had been, admittedly, surveying the Turkoman country towards Sarakhs, on the Afghan border. He had since been engaged on similar service further East, and a report got about that he had been arrested at Ghurian, and forbidden to return to Herat. The *Gólos*, having made enquiries, received a telegram from him early in July stating that not only had he met with no opposition in Afghanistan, but he had everywhere been cordially welcomed. At Herat the Khan came out to meet him, and furnished him with guides to enable him to continue his journey. It was only on his way back that he went to Ghurian for other guides into Persia. In Western Afghanistan, at least, the storming of Geok Tepě had, evidently, gone far towards restoring Russia's prestige.

A few days only before the publication of this news from Lessár, Russia was struck dumb with consternation and grief at the death of Skóbeleff, which occurred with dramatic suddenness in Moscow on the 7th July. As I then wrote :

“ The daring courage he displayed in the Turkish campaign made General Skóbeleff the idol of the soldiery and people. His name was in everyone's mouth, and in the remotest villages of the interior prints of the ‘ White General,’ calm and collected, with Turkish bullets raining round him, shared the honours of the peasants' walls with that of their father the Tsar.

“ Since then, the brilliant expedition against the Tekkes, and the too-famous Parisian tirade against Austria and

Germany, had raised the hero of Plevna to a height of popularity that few men in any country have attained. His loss will be felt not only throughout the vast Empire he served so well, but wherever Slavonic blood flows in the veins of men. He fought side by side with those of them who are free, and his dearest ambition was to liberate those who still bow their heads to Turk or to Teuton."

To the Slavophil party his death was an irremediable blow; and even those Russians who feared his war-like ardour and extraordinary influence could not hear without emotion of the passing of that gallant spirit.

The differences between England and Russia were accentuated during the summer of 1882 by the bombardment of Alexandria and the trend of events generally in Egypt, the Russian view being, briefly, that England ought not to have control of the Suez Canal unless Russia at the same time obtained command of the Straits.

On 1st November I wrote to Count Tolstóy requesting him to take the *Standard* off the index of papers prohibited in Russia. Knowing his political proclivities I ventured to point out that by disallowing this and other organs of the English Conservative press the British colony was, in fact, reduced to the necessity of reading only Radical papers, which I felt sure could not be in accordance with his Excellency's way of thinking! The prohibition, which had lasted since the war, and had been maintained, despite my solicitations, by such very different men as Mélikoff and Ignátieff, was promptly removed.

One day, in November, was published the first volume of Dr. Yavórsky's book on the Stoliétóff mission to Kabul, in 1879.¹ My three-column summary was the first notice of this very interesting work in any country. When the second volume came out, six weeks later, I treated it in the same way, and these two reviews con-

¹ *Journey of the Russian Embassy through Afghanistan, etc.*, trs. Indian Intelligence Branch (Majors Elles and Gowan), Calcutta, 1885.

tained the fullest account in our language of Dr. Yavórsky's revelations until the book was translated into English for the Indian Government. In order to get ahead of possible rivals, I procured early copies of the volumes, and did the work upon each in one day—or night—of thirteen hours.

The year ended with a final and crowning disaster to the Slavophil party and their foreign allies. On the 31st December, on the stroke of midnight, died at Ville d'Avray Léon Gambetta. A terrible year indeed for the party of *revanche* east and west—Skóbeleff dead in Russia, Gambetta in France, Ignátieff in disgrace, Katkóff a renegade,¹ only Aksákoff, the fearless, still championing the cause of the Slav.

On the other hand the rout of the Russian Liberals—Mélikoff, Miliútine, Abazá, the *Gólos* and *tutti quanti*—was still more decisive. The Slavophiles were checked as beloved but too zealous friends—the constitutionalists were knocked down and trampled upon as enemies of Tsar and country. Alexander III. at Gatchina and at Peterhof pursued the even tenor of his way in masterly inactivity. There was, in the circumstances, much, very much, to be said for his policy. Indeed had he been able to secure justice for Jew and Gentile, high and low, rich and poor, as undoubtedly he wished, throughout his wide dominions, he would have deserved and perhaps won the everlasting gratitude of his people. But that was beyond him, beyond any possible Autocrat of any number of Russias.

¹ I refer only to the above-mentioned pro-German article.

CHAPTER VII

Salting a pheasant's tail—The magic of the woods—Snow-mimicry—Good and bad surfaces—Sudden changes—Cold that burns—Beauty beyond words—An English shooting-club—Elk, right and left—A cruel sport—Elk yards—Elk-calling—Raven and falcon—Tracking in the snow—*Intaglio* and *in relieve*—The wily bear—Reading the signs—Fox, elk and bear—Do wolves pack?—How the stories grow—Wolves and sucking pigs—The faithful serf—Romance and fact—Lynx-eyed, lynx-eared, another disillusion—Dietz and his dogs—A tragic death—Second expedition to Olónets—A narrow escape—Photographing bears—A forest-fountain—She-bears and cubs—Rival honey-lovers—Bear-worship—Alexander II. and the dancing-bear—Traitor snow.

See maps on p. 254, and at end of volume.

THE first snow I remember to have seen fell in 1859 at Waltham Abbey, when my father was second in charge at the powder works there, under General Askwith. The nurses had already told me that birds could be caught by the simple expedient of putting salt on their tails, and when a resplendent cock-pheasant strutted out at the end of the Long Walk they declared that snow would do quite as well. I tried it! But it was not until twenty years later, when I went after bears in Olónets, that I was able to realise, and in full measure to enjoy, the beauty of snow in the woodlands. There I lived with it weeks at a time, trudging or gliding long distances after bears, camping in the forest, or driving through it on the narrow sledge-roads, not only by day but, often enough, half through the long winter night. The weather, with rare exceptions, was perfect. Snow

lay deep on the ground, compact, and with a fine running surface; while overhead every branch and twig of the deciduous trees and pines was outlined by it against the blue sky, the drooping boughs of the firs weighed down by its rounded masses, its own surface sparkling, everywhere, as with millions upon millions of diamonds, in the light of sun, moon or stars. Nor was that all. Beauty alone can never make fairy-land. Some note, at least, of mystery, some touch of the fantastic, must needs be added, as in this case they were, abundantly, by the shadows, long even at midday, by the tense, I had almost said uncanny, silence in the forest-depths, but most of all by the strangely perfect animal forms assumed by the snow-masses on certain of the trees. The broken stump of an aspen would take, may be, the shape of an old man or woman; a leaning alder might be hugged by the white simulacrum of a bear; while on all sides leopards and lionesses, or maneless lions, bowed down with their weight the smaller pines and spruces on which they leant. As for the birches, so tall and slender were they that the first heavy snow, lodging in their tops, bent them over and down to the ground or near it, where frost and thaw, alternating, combined with further snow-falls to fix them for the rest of the winter; so that often we would drive or glide, verst after verst, through white arcades or under single arches, of varying spring and span. And here, too, was animal mimicry, for of its own weight the snow would sag and slip, in places, on the smooth, round stems without actually breaking or falling, and would then take on the ghostly resemblance of long, lithe serpents—boa, may be, or voluminous anaconda.

Snow-crystals, as the text-books tell us, take no less than a thousand different forms, many of them of exceeding beauty, and it is, doubtless, this variety of crystallization that accounts, in part, at least, for the very different quality of snow at different times and in different places.

For it is not merely a question of greater or less cold; fine powdery snow, for instance, is a concomitant of hard frost, yet from a *ski*-er's point of view it makes a very poor surface. On the other hand, a certain much coarser grain, like granulated magnesia—a form, I think, of hoar-frost—on the top of firm snow slips very well indeed. There are, of course, many degrees of slipperiness between the best and the worst surfaces, but nothing is more depressing, or, conversely, more delightfully exhilarating, than the rapidity with which, on occasion, you may pass from one extreme to the other. We would start, say, at 9 or 10 a.m., with the snow in perfect condition, the thermometer showing thirty degrees of frost or more, and before midday, with no sun showing, be reduced to lifting our *ski* every few minutes to knock off the masses of snow that would keep sticking to their under sides, making progress all but impossible. Or, waking to find the roof a-drip, the thermometer well above freezing-point and prospects seemingly hopeless, an hour or two later would see us moving freely, to end a rapturous day with a frost to freeze the very marrow in our bones.

It is well known, of course, that the effect of great cold is in some ways strangely similar to that of great heat. Grasp a gun-barrel in very hard frost and the inside of your hand will be blistered. A Danish friend who went in search of De Long of the *Jeanette* told me that near the mouth of the Lena a chip of frozen meat he incautiously allowed to touch his lips in passing scarified them. As Milton says :

“ . . . the parching air
Burns froze, and cold performs the effect of fire.”

A little beyond our club-house at Yukki stood, in those early days, an unusually large and fine birch of the so-called “weeping” variety. This tree when covered, as I sometimes saw it, to the very last pendulous twig

with hoar-frost a full inch deep, and lighted by the golden or roseate hues of sunset or dawn, was one of the most beautiful sights imaginable.

In November (1882) when the snow came I drove up to Ostramánsha,¹ a shooting place thirty miles north of St. Petersburg, by road, or an apology for a road, belonging to an English club I had recently joined. The elk in these districts were at that time of year in the habit of moving slowly northwards into Finland, where the game laws gave them better protection—not that I attribute their movement to this fact; it depended, more probably, on climatic conditions. We made various "rings" with the usual noisy crowd of beaters—men and women, all taught to yell their loudest—but the elk, distracted by the hullabaloo, invariably broke and scattered in all directions, seldom giving the guns the ghost of a chance.

On the second day, the weather being gloomy in the extreme, with wet snow falling, we were about to give up in despair, after two or three vain attempts, and devote the afternoon to whist beside a blazing log-fire in the club-house, when I suggested stationing the guns—there were four of us—on our own northern border, and sending only half-a-dozen good men on *ski* to do nothing more than accelerate the natural movement of the beasts by

¹ So named from a former owner, the celebrated Count Ostermann. Andréi Ivánovich, as he was called in Russia, his real Christian name being Heinrich Johann Friedrich, who was born in 1686, son of a Lutheran pastor at Bochum in Westphalia and came to Russia in 1703 as secretary to Admiral Cruys, a Dutchman in the service of Peter the Great. He had a great career under Peter, Catherine I. and Anne, and was awarded money and villages after the peace of Tristadt, 1728, for his services as Russian plenipotentiary; but when Elizabeth came to the throne, she exiled him to Siberia, where he died a miserable death at Berezóv, on the banks of the Ob, in 1747. Peter had said of him that he was indispensable to Russia, that he had never committed a fault in politics, and that none knew better the wants and resources of the country. Count Ostermann's grave with mouldering coffin and remains was discovered by chance, and a cross put over it, in 1847. Peter the Great's favourite, Prince Menshikoff, likewise died an exile at Berezóv.

tapping on the trees and calling from time to time "So, ho!"

The idea was a new one, and there was much demur, but eventually my companions agreed to try the experiment. We drove off accordingly, some seven or eight versts, to the border, a low ridge where, facing south, we had fairly thick forest in front of us, scattered pine-trees on the ridge itself, and at our backs marshy ground sparsely covered with birch and alder, the whole deep in soft, wet snow.

My place was on the extreme left of the line, with no one in sight. I waited patiently for fully two hours before anything happened. Then a slight noise to the right caught my ear, and, turning cautiously, I saw a truly glorious sight—seven great elk in a bunch, all bulls, all, or nearly all, with grand heads, stepping slowly northwards across the ridge.

I could not fire, for my friends were in line beyond. I waited therefore till the herd had got well down on to the marshland behind; then picking out the biggest I dropped him in his tracks with a bullet in the heart from my smooth-bore, the distance being about forty paces. I waited a moment to single out the next biggest and fired my remaining barrel at him, apparently without result. That is to say, he started—but so did all the rest. Immediately afterwards shots rang out in rapid succession as the elk came into view of my three companions, one after the other. They, of course, until warned by my firing, had been steadily gazing southwards, with no idea that the game had got behind them. A little later the *ski*-men came out, and soon all were gathered round my prize, congratulating me.

Then a shout from a keeper summoned us to where, some sixty yards further on, another noble beast lay dead. My friends' hopes ran high. They had obtained glimpses, only, of the elk through the snow-laden trees. Each had fired two bullets; each thought the fateful one might

be his ! A careful examination showed that there was but one wound of entry, none of exit. The bullet, therefore, must be inside the carcase ; and as each man had used a rifle of different calibre there could be no difficulty in deciding the rival claims. I, well satisfied already, said nothing.

It was an eager group that followed the gruesome operation of gralloching, and it is a fact that I was more sorry than glad when the head-keeper, after groping about in the cavity of the chest, withdrew a gory hand holding fast between finger and thumb a spherical bullet from my Westley Richards !

The disappointment of one of my friends was so obvious that having had both heads stuffed I presented this one to him. Some years later I bought it back at a sale, and the pair now adorn a certain thatch-roofed billiard-room in South Oxfordshire, once Sir Alexander Condie Stephen's. There is little to choose between them : the lighter head is the more symmetrical, and has one more point than the heavier one and much broader palms. The latter is, by measurement, as fine, almost, as any on record. As a pair right and left, as far as I know, they *are* the record.¹ I speak of European elk. The elk in Western Siberia (called *Sakháti*) grow bigger horns, I am told ; so does the Canadian moose. A Siberian saying proves the belief that elk, like others of the deer tribe, can, at times, be more dangerous to man than creatures commonly fiercer : " Hunt bears—make your bed ; hunt elk—your coffin."

The only merit I can claim in regard to this affair is that of having been the first, though a newcomer, to

¹ I have re-measured these heads since writing the above. The dimensions are as follows : No. 1, Span 50 inches, circumference well above burr 8 inches ; number of points 16 ; length of antler (outside curve) 35 inches : No. 2, Span 42 inches ; circumference $7\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch ; points 17 ; length of antler (outside curve) 29 inches. In Rowland Ward's *Records of Big Game*, 7th ed., London, 1914, p. 99, only two or possibly three heads are better than my No. 1.

suggest taking advantage of the march of the elk northward. I was well and promptly rewarded!

In one condition of the snow—when, late in winter, the surface is first melted then hardened by frost, to an icy crust—elk can be run down and slaughtered at ease; but this is a cruel form of sport, if sport it can be called. For the elk, with his heavy body, thin legs and sharp hooves, breaks through the crust (*nast* in Russian) at every step; the fetlock joints before long get cut and bleed, further progress becomes impossible, and the poor beast falls a piteous victim to the ruthlessness of man.

I have read in Russian books on sport that elk make "yards" in the snow, as moose do in Canada, and it may be so; but I have no knowledge of it myself, nor did I hear it so much as mentioned by Russian sportsmen, amateur or professional.¹

Bull-elk, like others of the deer tribe, challenge each other to battle in the rutting season, in autumn, and advantage is taken of this habit to get within shooting distance by imitating the call. The leaves are then still on the trees, so that this involves coming to pretty close quarters, which, in the circumstances, is not without danger. This branch of sport is or was better known and practised among the German nobility of the Baltic provinces than in Russia proper, but my friend E. D. called and killed a bull-elk one autumn night, and, owing to some strange freak, a *tok*-king capercaillie fell to his gun just afterwards.

A chance shot may sometimes be obtained at an elk when swimming or fording lake or stream. In Finland, once, drifting silently down the rushy Kurman-pohya, which joins the Vuoksa near the town of Yaskis, in my Canadian canoe (the *Sorsapoika*—duckling—the first of

¹ This is fully borne out by no less an authority than Mr. J. G. Millais in a letter written lately in reply to an enquiry I had made through our mutual friend, Mr. W. L. Sclater. Mr. Millais says that even in America he had only seen "yards" in Quebec and Ontario.

the kind ever seen in those parts), I came suddenly upon an elk knee-deep in the water, and so close to me that I could have touched him with my paddle. He was so astonished that he stood stock-still a moment or two, staring at the strange apparition, then turned and splashed his way frantically to the shelter of a neighbouring wood.

On 4th January, 1883, when after wolves at the Powder Works,¹ as we came to a glade in the forest where a dead horse had been put down to attract them, ravens flew off, as usual, and one of them was struck down, in sight of the leading sledges, by a hawk or falcon. I was, unfortunately, behind and only got a glimpse of the bird as it disappeared over the trees, but I saw that it was very light in colour, if not white. There was a hard crust on the surface of the snow, yet there was a hole one and a half foot deep where the birds had fallen together. The raven hopped off, but we caught him and put an end to his misery; so fierce had been the grip and so powerful that the flesh was torn, leaving the bones bare and white but splashed with blood, from the middle joint of the right wing to the centre of the back—a ghastly wound.

I suppose it to have been a Greenland falcon,² though the Russians called it, as they usually do every bird of prey, *yástreb*, which, properly, means hawk or kite. A kite, of course, would not strike a raven, though, perhaps, a famished goshawk might.

The art of tracking wild animals by their footprints in the snow, ringing them and driving them on to the guns, was brought to perfection shortly before my arrival

¹ The Porokhovúie Zavódi, or (Government) Powder Works, were situated four or five miles north-east of St. Petersburg on the banks of the little river Okhta. Around and beyond these were extensive forests and bogs, the shooting over which was leased from the Crown by Schouvaloff.

² See p. 284, where the occurrence of this noble bird is recorded within five miles of the locality in question.

in Russia by a certain tracker known by the name of Lukáš—Big Luke—whose methods were quickly adopted by others, so that presently all professional trackers came to be known as *Lukáš*, pl. *Lukashee*. The original Lukáš was in the employment of Pólovtseff, at whose shooting parties I sometimes met him.

It might be thought that tracking in snow would present no difficulty at all. Indeed, given well-packed snow, deep enough—two feet at least—to level the rough surface of the ground, with an inch or two of fresh fallen, softish snow above it to take the perfect imprint of the creatures' feet, and the task of merely following a track—of necessity newly made—is an easy one. But following means just driving the game ahead in whatever direction it may happen to be moving, and this would only by the merest chance bring about the desired result. The *Lukáš* goes otherwise to work. Having picked up the spoor and noted the direction, he casts off to right or left, making a considerable detour so as to cut the track again further on. The extent of the detour is determined by the local conditions and by the greater risk of alarming the quarry if the "ring" be too small. On well-kept estates there are cuttings at right angles, by which the forests are divided into more or less equal blocks, and these cuttings afford convenient runs for the *Lukáš* on his *ski*, so that the "ring," as first roughed out, is often enough a square. But unless the game is already alarmed, or adverse weather conditions prevail, the *Lukáš*, using his judgment, will venture to cut the ring once and even twice. With moderate cold or with a strong wind blowing this may well succeed; but in very severe frost, which implies calm, if the surface snow is hard such a proceeding is not to be thought of, for the air becomes then so resonant that the noise of the snowshoes would inevitably set the quarry moving. I remember that on one occasion when after wolves with Pólovtseff, near Luga, Lukáš himself was completely baffled by such conditions, the

thermometer marking -27° Réaumur (c. 29° below zero Fahrenheit). If the ring is completed without the track being cut again, it follows that the quarry is within. The beaters are led round to windward as soon as may be, a few being posted to guard the flanks; then, the shooters having taken their places on the opposite or lee side, a signal is given, generally the firing of a gun, and the drive begins. Often enough the flanks are guarded by lines of red flags, thus economising in men, and money.

If the tracker while ringing meets the track again, he knows, of course, that the animal has gone further. He again casts off to right or left, and so on until a complete ring is made, or the attempt abandoned.

A first-class *Lukásh*—and none but first-class men should bear the name—will sometimes show his skill by driving out game to one or more guns with the help of very few beaters, or, even, none at all. But this is a refinement depending on so many conditions that its success can never be counted on. The lie of the ground, the disposition of the trees, the direction of the wind and of the place of refuge likely to be made for—all this and more must enter into the *Lukásh's* consideration and guide him in posting the guns or directing his own movements; and his efforts, after all, may be rendered abortive by such uncontrollable accidents as the warning cries or movements of birds, squirrels and other small game, or by carelessness on the part of one of the guns.

Ideal conditions seldom obtain. If snow continues to fall, the tracks, especially of the smaller animals, are obliterated almost as soon as made. If not, as time goes by, more and more tracks become visible of other and various creatures, from field-mouse, ermine and squirrel, to mink and otter, hare and fox, or, possibly, lynx, wolf, glutton, elk or bear, besides birds, of which the black-game dig deep holes in the snow—some say by plunging head foremost into it from mid-air—and may sometimes

be flushed out of them at very close quarters. When alighting on or rising from the surface they make unmistakable marks with the quill-feathers of their wings as well as with their feet. All the many tracks cross and recross, and frequently overrun one another to the bewilderment of the trackers, the hare with his many windings being the arch culprit. When the snow is soft, too, one animal will often follow in the track of another of quite different kind, not necessarily in pursuit but for greater ease of going. In this way a deep and well-trodden path will sometimes be made, though for no great distance. Then the wind, if the snow be dry and loose, will drive it over and into the tracks, obliterating them not less effectually and rapidly than falling snow; while if the trees themselves are thick with snow, lumps great and small will come flopping down with wind or thaw, adding to the confusion. Moreover, if the thaw continues, bits of bark, twigs, even branches that have fallen from time to time, come out on the once immaculate surface, and the chance of tracking successfully anything smaller than elk or bear is slight indeed. Late in the season, after a prolonged thaw, a curious phenomenon may often be seen. Tracks made originally high up in firm snow will now stand out above the sunken surface owing to the compression caused by the animal's weight and consequent greater resistance to the risen temperature. *Intaglio* becomes *in rilievo*.

The problem, it will be seen, is not always an easy one: it can even be of a nature to defy the utmost skill of such an expert as old Lukáš himself.

But if the tracker has moments of doubt and difficulty, as indubitably he has many a day of privation and hardship, with now and then a spice of real danger—the bear, for instance, will deliberately make a circle back to near his own track in search of his pursuer (*petliu diélayet*, “makes a loop,” as the hunters tell us)—he has also great compensations. For there is a mighty

fascination in the northern winter, especially in the forest region, and the study of tracks in the snow can easily become of absorbing interest.

An experienced tracker knows not only that he is following such and such a creature, but in favourable conditions can read its every emotion. He can tell its pace and gait, and judge by its movements the first scenting or sighting of preyed-on or preyer; he can feel, as the case may be, its hopes or fears; he can trace both flight and pursuit; participate in anguish or triumph, and, mentally, be in at the death—all this and much, much more. In a word, the absorbing drama of winter life in fen-land and forest is an open book before him.

To give but an instance. I remember how once in spring, after a night spent in a *shaláshka*¹ at Irínovka, to see the gallant black-cock fight, to the death, may be, for the grey-hens' favours, we took up the fresh track of a fox, and followed it quietly on our *ski* over the crusted surface of the snow, while a keeper sped rapidly round in the hope of heading the beast and giving us a chance to shoot. Crossing an open bog we came presently to a small patch of wood a few yards short of which the fox, we could see, had stopped abruptly and then sneaked off at an acute angle over the open ground again. The question at once arose, why had he done this? Evidently something had occurred, and that suddenly, to make him change direction. He had feared to enter the wood, yet had not been much afraid; for his retreat, the tracks told us, had been not only slow but reluctant. Had he scented his arch-enemy man? If so, in the circumstances—what breath of air there was blew in our faces—we might look to encounter a poacher, for no one else could well be there.

Puzzled, we advanced a few yards, and there, just at the edge of the wood, we came on the tracks of a large

¹ A tent or shelter made of boughs.

bear, which had evidently pounced out suddenly, paused a moment—growling, no doubt, as much as to say, "Be off, or I'll soon make you!"—and then, having attained his object, the fox having slunk away, had re-entered the wood. All this was as plainly to be read in the tracks as if we ourselves had been spectators—invisible ones, of course—of the little comedy. But why this demonstration? The bear, obviously, had seen reason to resent interference. What that reason might be it was our next business to find out. Loading with ball-cartridge, by way of precaution, we followed him in, and there, not ten yards inside the wood, we came on the carcase of an elk, three parts hidden under a mass of branches, which the bear—after satisfying his hunger for the time being—had torn down for the purpose from the neighbouring pines and spruces. He was somewhat out of luck, for if the fox had merely annoyed him our arrival was a very different matter. It was unlikely that he would venture to revisit his larder. Again taking up his track we followed it cautiously to the open bog at the further side of the wood, to find that he had already shuffled out of ken. A keeper recognised the elk as a wounded one he had sighted more than once of late. The bear had either pulled it down, or found it dead, an hour or two, may be, before our arrival on the scene.

Having to return to town we left instructions to ring *Mishka*¹ if possible, and let us know by telegraph so that we might come back that night, but we learned, later, that he had crossed our border without stopping, and what became of him we never knew.

The belief that wolves exist in large numbers in Russia and that they hunt in packs prevails not only in foreign countries but in Russia itself. Yet, with exceptional

¹ Dim. for *Mikháilo*, a favourite name for the bear, enlarged sometimes to *Mikháilo Ivánovich Topóghin*. *General Topóghin* is also much used.

opportunities for learning the truth, I was never able to obtain trustworthy evidence that such is really the case. I knew personally the most famous trackers in Russia, the men employed by Pólovtséff, Astashóff, Schouváloff himself, and by various well-known shooting-clubs. I knew intimately not only amateur sportsmen such as those I have named, but men like the three Dietzs, who were all in reality professionals, to say nothing of Prince Iván Golítsin, a son of General Hall, and others who devoted their lives to sport. Now, all of them had heard stories of wolf-packs in Siberia, in the far south or south-east, in the Carpathians, in Bulgaria, the Crimea—but not one would vouch for any case of packing within his own ken, or of an attack by wolves on human beings save in the case, now and then, of a wounded wolf, or of one afflicted with rabies. So much so that one hunter told me: "If ever an unwounded wolf attacks you beware! he is certainly rabid and the danger terrible indeed." Now, in a country like Russia, where the ground is white with snow six months out of twelve, it is impossible that if wolves congregate in packs the fact should remain unknown to those whose profession in life is the chase and their special attribute the reading of spoor in the snow.

On the other hand, I know from personal observation how easily stories of wolves and their doings are sometimes generated. During the ten years that I shot and hunted in Russia I was in a position, almost literally, to count the wolves in the large forest district north of St. Petersburg between the Neva and Ládoga Lake on one side and the Finnish border on the other. The shootings leased to Schouváloff by the Crown, his brother's estate at Vártemiaki, the ground rented by the Ostramansha, Kóltusha, Sheremétievka and other clubs covered in themselves a large part of the area in question, and what was left came well within the compass of my knowledge. Now in all those ten years I venture to say

that there were never more than half-a-dozen litters or so of wolves in all that vast space; never more than thirty, or at the outside forty, wolves, alive and going, at one and the same time; probably not often half that number.

What happened was this. A paragraph would appear in one of the St. Petersburg papers, let us say about Christmas time, to the effect that "Wolves are very numerous this year and more than usually bold. Last week at Levashóvo they attacked a dog belonging to the peasant-woman Martha Ivánovna Toptíghina, tore it to pieces and devoured it before her very eyes." A week later that or another paper would print: "The ravages of wolves in the neighbourhood of the Capital are assuming a serious aspect. Between Deviátkina and Toksovo on Thursday last a numerous pack made its appearance on the high-road itself, and killed a cow that had incautiously been allowed to stray from its byre. Luckily Count Peter Andréyevich Schouvalóff, with a party of friends including his High Excellency —, His Serenity, Prince —, the very well-born —, and the Englishman — made an *obláva* (ring) next day and succeeded in killing no less than three of the savage animals, to the great joy of the peasants, who willingly lent their services as beaters"—and so on during winter. As a matter of fact each and all of these notices would refer to one and the same lot of wolves, perhaps sixteen in number, not a pack but two or three closely related litters, which ranged from Levashóvo, the neighbouring estate to Paul Schouvalóff's on the west, to Toksovo on his extreme eastern boundary, and a bit beyond. We would bag ten or twelve of the sixteen in the course of the season, the remainder scattering to form another formidable "pack," to entertain newspaper readers with next year.

To take a totally different country—the steppe Government of Vorónej. There, in three successive years, Schouvalóff and his party bagged fourteen, fourteen and

twelve wolves with the aid of guns, fox-hounds and *borzois*, the area covered each time in the course of from three to four weeks, being roughly *fifty miles square*. No such thing as a pack was ever seen or heard of.

The idea that wolves are very numerous in Russia has gained substance, also, from the very natural tendency of certain sportsmen to exaggerate their performances; and more especially is this the case in regard to that form of sport in which wolves and sucking-pigs are supposed to play the chief parts. According to published accounts—I have one or two before me but will not pillory the writers—you have only to take a sucking-pig (in good voice) and drive along the high-road in a sledge any winter's night, trailing behind you a bundle of straw at the end of a string to represent piggy—who meantime must be made to squeal his loudest—to enjoy excellent sport with the numerous wolves that will assuredly come to the lure the first time of asking. Here again I am regretfully forced to say that I never knew a man of proved veracity who claimed to have bagged even one wolf by this method, while one honest friend assured me that he had tried it no less than seventeen times in places where wolves were known to exist, but had only once had a shot at what he thought might be one. However, it is not improbable that wolves have sometimes been secured in this manner, which is, doubtless, full of fascination for the man with the gun if not for his four-footed assistant.

In conclusion, I regret to feel obliged to demolish once for all—as a matter of hard fact that is, for the romance of it will last for ever; that is the triumph and glory of romance—the story of the devoted serf who to save his cruel master's children threw himself to the wolves when, in scores if not in hundreds—tongues lolling eyes blazing—with that

“ . . . long, slow gallop that can tire
The hounds' deep hate, the hunter's ire,”

they had run down the haughty nobleman's magnificent sleigh drawn by three horses swifter than the wind !

Now, everyone who has travelled much in Russia, during winter, knows that anywhere between the Prussian frontier at Virjbalóvo and Nikolájevsk at the mouth of the Amoor river, or cross-wise between Archangel and Erivan, the roads are occupied day and night by horse-dog- or reindeer-drawn sledges, carrying the produce of the Empire to market. These countless sledges or sleighs are almost invariably heavily laden, so that the pace of the creatures that draw them can seldom exceed a walk. The driver, often asleep or drunk—not infrequently an old man, a woman or even a child—has no means whatever of defence against wild beasts, whether on two legs or on four—consider all this a moment and then ask yourself if it be possible that famishing wolves should invariably neglect this easy prey—and if not where are the records ? ¹—to run down sledges drawn at racing pace by blood-horses and occupied by men having at least a gun or a brace of pistols to defend themselves withal ? It is a delightful story ; a fabric deftly woven, with a thread of pure gold running through it. I shall cherish it till I die—but *it won't wash !*

The mention of laden sledges reminds me that if English horses are apt to become panic-stricken and helpless in deep snow, not so the Russian. Travelling beyond the Volga I learnt that the Kirghiz left their horses out on the open steppe in winter to find their own food, which they do by scraping away the snow with their feet. On the narrow, forest tracks of the North, when lines of sledges meet, the owners get down, ascertain in a moment which batch is more numerous or more heavily laden, and without a word the others make way. This involves urging and pushing the ponies into the snow, often over their necks. They do not like it, for the exertion is great, but they are never frightened,

¹ Or, to put it otherwise, why should wolves be famished ?

and always struggle back willingly to the roadway when clear again. These encounters happened very frequently when we were out after bears in the Nóvgorod and Olónets Governments, and, as we were few in number, with no loads and merely on pleasure bent, it was nearly always for us to make room. But whichever way it went I never heard an angry word over it, far less did I witness dissension or strife. The rule of the road was law.

On 30th December, at Vártemiaki, the party being Schouváloff, von Schweinitz, Pólovtséff, Constantine Dietz and myself, we got three lynxes in one ring—a rare occurrence. We had made this *obláva* just before luncheon. A lynx crossed in front of me, slanting towards Schouváloff; I let it pass and he killed it. Another fell to Pólovtséff's gun; the beaters came out and the sport was, as far as we knew or thought, at an end. But Dietz came up hot-foot and declared that he had seen a lynx that could not be either of those killed. He was noted for enthusiasm, I will not say for exaggeration. His argument seemed inconclusive, and we chaffed him somewhat unmercifully; but he insisted so strongly that, the meal ended, Schouváloff agreed to have the same ring driven again, when sure enough, after a time, out came a third lynx, a young one, to be shot by von Schweinitz.

It is usual, and has been since classical days, when writing of the lynx to lay stress upon its extraordinary quickness of sight and hearing, qualities which make for safety; and those sportsmen, such at least as I met, who had had the good fortune to kill a specimen or two, were wont to take an especial pride in the fact. My own experience was that round St. Petersburg, where late in winter lynxes each year made their appearance in the woods in small numbers, they displayed a want of caution smacking rather of tameness, not to say stupidity, than of cunning or valour. They would come close up to one of the keepers' huts near Okhta; on more than

one occasion a lynx was seen in gardens on the outskirts of the capital itself, and I have known them walk out as quietly as domestic cats so near the beaters who were driving them that I was half afraid to shoot lest I should hit one of the latter. Moreover, at least once at Vártemiaki a lynx that had been shot at and missed in one ring was circled and killed in another an hour or so afterwards. In short, once found, this was the easiest quarry of all, save only the white hare.

Constantine Dietz, brother of Alexander (Sasha) Dietz—one of the unhappy parents whose tragedy is related on page 353—was an artillery officer attached to the Arsenal. He was an ardent sportsman who did more than any one to improve the breed of pointers and setters in Russia by importing the best English and Irish blood. Moreover, he trained the dogs to rare perfection. His pointers were not content with pointing, but having found their game would come back on tip-toe, as it were, to their master, look up in his face, and with a knowing wag of the tail, say, practically, "*I've found the bird; you come along and shoot it.*" This was called *sannónsem*, a delightful combination of the Russian "*s*" (conjunctive) with the French *annonce*, plus the Russian "instrumental" case-ending. Schouvaloff employed him as a sort of super-head-keeper. His end was tragic. One day at the powder works when I happened not to be present, at the beginning of a "drive" a shot was heard from where Dietz had his "number." It was thought that he had fired at a fox or hare. At the end of the drive his neighbour Pólovtseff found to his horror that Dietz was dead, his head blown to pieces by his own gun. The meaning of it was never told abroad, but I fear something more terrible than mere death lay behind it. However, this was some years later.

Towards the end of February, 1883, I made a second hunting expedition to Olónets, this time with three companions—E. W. Primrose, Eddie Thornton, Frank D * * .

They were all good sportsmen, but "Primmy" was a bit "jealous," while D * *, who came out to us from Warwickshire for the occasion, had not set foot on *ski* in his life so far—and thereby hangs a tale, the tale of my only real adventure with a bear. We took it in turns to shoot, settling the order of procedure by lot to start with. When Thornton's turn came I, thinking three guns enough and to spare for one bear, took only a camera. The *berlôga* was found, and I knew that Thornton was very anxious lest Primrose should get ahead of him, for if the animal bolted and the first shot was a miss it was, according to our rules, any one's game. However, that was no business of mine. I slid downhill through the trees, a gentle slope, in the direction the bear was likely to take and got my camera ready. Presently rifle-shots rang out in rapid succession—one, two, three, four—and before I could move I saw the bear, with bloody head and growling furiously, coming straight at me only twenty or twenty-five yards away. I made a desperate effort to turn, but was held fast by small spruce trees sticking up out of the deep snow. The only movement possible was literally into the bear's mouth! It was a very bad moment indeed. I whipped out my knife, but a six-inch blade would never have saved me from a mauling. Then, in the nick of time, when the animal was nearly on me, old Feódor came gliding down through the trees on my right, and ran his spear well in behind the bear's left shoulder. He missed the heart, for which he apologised afterwards, saying: "You see, Iván Ivánovich, there wasn't any time to spare; I was a bit hurried." I forgave him! Thornton came down a moment or two later and gave the *coup de grace* with a bullet in the head. He explained that "Primmy's" over-eagerness had flustered him. The bear bolted very suddenly amongst trees and thick snow; he fired both barrels, hitting the beast in the nose with one, missing with the other. Primrose blazed away almost simultaneously

without effect. "But how about D * * ?" Coming up at this moment he answered the question himself, with his favourite phrase: "Snow-shoes are worrisome things!" It appeared that just as the fun began he fell on his back in a patch of very deep snow, and had only now with difficulty and the help of the men succeeded in regaining his feet. He was a good shot and a cool one—perhaps the best man of the four all round, certainly the best looking, but the *ski* or "snow-shoes," as we called them in those days, were too much for him. On this trip both Thornton and I took photographs of bears. There were no *kodaks* then, or films, or any of the modern aids to rapid photography, and I had a huge full-plate camera, with clumsy wooden legs. I set it up in the snow opposite the *berlôga* one day when it was my turn to shoot. The men held back the dogs; no one whispered a word while my arrangements were being made. Then with a finger of the left hand on the brass trigger of the shutter, and my Westley Richards in my right hand, I gave the signal to loose the dogs. At the very first yelp out jumped a good-sized bear. I clicked the brass trigger, threw up my gun, and by good luck killed the brute with one bullet. I doubt if there was more than a second between the two operations. The clumsy tripod, with its legs deep in hummocky snow, shook; the photograph eventually gave only a blurred figure of the bear; but I record it as an early attempt at a kind of art or sport which has since become popular and given wonderful results. Thornton, with a smaller camera, obtained a much better negative a day or two later, but it was some one else's turn to shoot the bear, a small one.

When we wanted water in the forest to make our tea or what not and the streams were fast frozen, we would cut a big stake from birch or spruce, stick it firmly in the snow with sharp end aslant towards the fire, impale on it a huge lump of snow, and soon a thin stream of clear water flowed steadily into our kettle or other receptacle.

This we called our "forest-fountain," but the peasants their "woodland cow" (*Liesnáya Koróva*).

After our bag of two years before, I was much astonished as day after day passed and we never once found a she-bear with cubs. The men explained that these settle down a good deal earlier than the males. When, as in the autumn of 1882, the snow comes late the females have already gone to sleep. The snow then covers them up, and there being no tracks they are never found, unless by mere chance. The males, on the other hand, having waited for the snow, give a chance to the trackers before lying down. The explanation seems reasonable. In 1881, in any case, when snow had fallen early the autumn before, we had a full proportion of females with cubs. In 1883, of eleven bears all were males or cubless females. The strangest thing is that the cubs are born, blind and hairless, after the mother has been asleep and foodless for months; thus in March, 1881, we took two such cubs from a lair, after killing the mother, not knowing what she had left behind her. We made a feeding-bottle for the little creatures, and kept them alive some days, but on the drive home one very cold night they died.

Where many trees have been blown down together, usually on a hill-side, forming what in Russian is called a *burelóm* ("storm-break"), the trunks lie sometimes one above another, or are raised from the ground at one end by their up-torn roots. These are favourite localities for the bear to winter in; but he avoids by instinct those particular spots where the snow is likely to accumulate to an abnormal depth, having no fancy for being trapped. In all my experiences I saw but one *berlóga* out of which its occupant failed to make a rapid exit when roused; and I must add, in reference to the oft-repeated statement that the bear in his winter lair is not only asleep but torpid, that the first barking of the dogs was almost always answered by a growl, and as often as not Bruin gave proof without delay of being not only

awake but very much alive. It is true, however, that my bear-shooting was done for the most part in the months of February and March, when, for all I know to the contrary, his sleep may be less profound than in mid-winter.

The Russian name for bear is *medvyéd*, which means "honey-lover," the first syllable being identical with our "mead." Russian historians—Kluchévsky, for instance—lay great stress on the importance of the forest industry of bee-keeping in the life of the primitive (Slavonic) inhabitants of Russia; and indeed it is obvious that when sugar was not yet known, honey must have held a position of supreme importance in the household economy of the human race. Now the bear is notoriously fond of honey, and it follows that between him and the Russian *mujík* a rivalry was established from the beginning, the echoes of which reverberate to this day in the speech and songs of the Russian people. In Siberia, as is well known, more than one tribe, beginning with the Ostiaks, treat the bear as a god, making all sorts of excuses when they kill him; and on the lower Amoor river I have myself seen bears kept in cages by the Ghiliaks, to be led out and killed with extraordinary ceremony at the yearly festival held with the object of ensuring a good run of salmon. There is possibly some remote connection between this and the Russian *mujík's* attitude towards the bear, which is on the surface coloured almost equally by affection and hatred. To hear him talk one would think, even, that the former predominated, but give him the chance and he will kill his friend Bruin without mercy, rejoice at his death, and even gloat, obscenely, over the details of skinning and dismembering that follow. One such scene remains but too vividly impressed on my memory; but that was in the Government of Nóvgorod, not among my decent Finnish friends of Olónets, and it was put down, correctly no doubt, by a Russian acquaintance, to the proximity of highroad and railway.

But what a comment on the influence of these supposed great instruments of civilization and progress !

It is often said that the bear during hibernation consumes his own fat. It may be so, but I have myself seen thick slabs of white fat stripped from a bear killed in the month of March after being turned out of a *berlóga*. The peasants believe that the bear turns over in his lair at the winter solstice, and that he lives during hibernation by sucking his own paws.

The bear is omnivorous, eating anything that comes his way from whortle-berries to old women. In former days he was tamed and taught to dance—a cruel business—in certain villages, more especially Sergach and Smorgoni ; hence the honorific appellations conferred upon him of *Sergatski bárin* (gentleman of Sergach), and *Smorgonski student* (Smorgon student).¹

In one old map of Russia there is a picture of a bear attempting to get at a bee's nest in a tree, but baffled by a collar studded with spikes fastened round the trunk ; in the delightful map of Olaus Magnus, of 1539, a trap is shown, in shape of a massive club with spiked head, so adjusted as to swing down and strike the bear on the skull when swarming up a tree to get at a hive above him. The bees are fearsome creatures nearly as large as the bear's head !

However, bear stories and bear-lore would easily fill a volume, and a big one. I will only add here the amusing incident recorded in a somewhat sententious passage taken from one of my notebooks of about this period :

“ The systematic deception to which the late Emperor of Russia was subject in the matter of sport—trapped foxes, trapped wolves, tame bears let out in the forest before him—is typical of the much more serious deception all monarchs and especially despotic ones, are ever exposed to, in the graver regions of policy and Government. The whole Court

¹ Bear-baiting, which prevailed formerly in England as well as in Russia, was, of course much more cruel, infamously cruel.

is in a conspiracy to hide the truth, and it is only occasionally that, as in the case of the bear that began to dance when Alexander II. threw up his rifle to take aim, the miserable tricks of his entourage are seen through and awarded meet castigation."

I could never claim to be classed among good shots, but in this forest shooting, at big game, where the range varied from, say, seventy to ten yards and even less—much less—I was, at least, lucky. In the winter of 1882-1883 I killed my two big elk and four bears each with one bullet. On the other hand, at smaller four-..... footed game and at birds I too often deserved Schouvaloff's reproachful "Iván Ivánovich! I shall have to propose you as next president of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals!" And the trouble was that, in winter, there was no possibility, with ground game at least, of shirking responsibility, of disguising or perverting the truth. I loved the snow dearly. I sometimes thought the snow loved me. But the moral nature of snow is of that virtuously austere kind which in some human beings, with souls no less white and cold—if any such still exist—leads them to betray even their best-beloved rather than tell a lie to save them. It is in vain to hint that the shot was a long or difficult one, that the trees were too thick, the pace, of fox, wolf or lynx, "simply terrific, my dear sir!" It will not do. The tracks are there, and not only the tracks, but the very furrows made by your shot, to prove the contrary. The truth, the whole bare and lamentable truth confronts you. It is there for all who run to read, but especially for those who run on *ski*, and above all for the irate, indignant keeper or *lukásh*, whose contemptuous shrug of the shoulders is harder to bear, even, than the grinning faces of the beaters, who gather round and whisper freely their opinions as to the *bárin's* poor performance.

There is only one course open to the unhappy culprit—that of abject confession and repentance.

CHAPTER VIII

Attack on Sir A. Condie Stephen—A new Triple Alliance—A changed state of affairs—Coronation of Alexander III.—The rose-bush Madonna—Caucasus transit-trade abolished—Visit to Usviát—Birds and beasts—A timber estate—White Russians—Mouraviéff and the Polish insurgents—His death—Mouraviéff's wife—Bezák—Old-time customs—A risky sport—Prince Gortchakóff at Sevastopol—The Russian evacuation—A sickening task—Bastion No. 4—Russian losses—The Russian God—An Emperor's infatuation—Dr. Botkin—Nihilism and the Third Section—Loris Mélikoff—Pauper students—Doctor's fees—*Moujiks* and *canaille*—Imperial economics—The Liberals become warlike—Nicholas I. and Napoleon III.—Count Reutern—Dmitri Tolstóy and the Press—The Zemstvo—A monomaniac—An unlucky photograph—*Silurus glanis*—The Communal system—Schouváloff on the Caucasus.

For position of Usviát see map at end of volume.

ON 18th February, 1883, news reached St. Petersburg of an attack on Mr., afterwards Sir, Alexander Condie Stephen, Secretary to the British Legation at Teheran, who, with a native escort, was engaged in exploring the Turkoman steppe. Eleven of his men were said to have been killed and nine wounded. Mr. Stephen himself escaped unhurt; but, speaking after many years, one is inclined to ask *que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?* On the other hand, there was a report of an attack on a Russian engineer or topographer between Askhabad and Merv, three of the escort being killed. I remarked sagely enough in transmitting this news: "It is evident that the steppes beyond the Russian boundary are still

far from safe, and it is probable that their condition will sooner or later lead to the interference of the neighbouring Powers."

I added by way of biographical detail: "Mr. Stephen, when attached to the Embassy in St. Petersburg, applied himself assiduously to the study of the Russian language, and published a translation of Lermontoff's work, the *Demon*. On the Bosphorus he served with distinction, etc." This, reaching my sub-editor without stops, he, knowing nothing of Lermontoff's poem and being puzzled by the title, as he read it—*The Demon on the Bosphorus*, reduced it to "he published a translation of Lermontoff's work on the Bosphorus!"

In April it became known that Italy had definitely joined the Austro-German alliance, which was, of course, in no way to the liking of the Slavophil party; but it could hardly have taken them by surprise after the events of the preceding fifteen months. When King Humbert, accompanied by his Foreign Minister, visited Vienna in November, 1881, the feelings of this, dominant, party in Russia were strongly excited at the prospect of a new and hostile Triple Alliance, with Italy in the third place;¹ and their mingled anger and alarm found vent in some very strongly worded articles in the *Nóvoe Vrémya*, which at that time had the credit of being the Ministerial organ. We were told that the alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy would constitute a threat, serve as the basis of an aggressive policy, and be the forerunner of war. Nothing had happened since to cause a change of opinion in this respect, and the *Nóvoe Vrémya* still regarded the alliance as a direct menace to the Balkan Slavs on the part of Austria; but the tone of its remarks was more moderate, and, indeed, the bellicose spirit which breathed throughout its former articles was conspicuously absent. The sight of Austria strengthening and perhaps extending

¹ The *Drei-Kaiser-bund*, or Alliance of The Three Emperors, was dated June 18th, 1881.

her hold on the Balkan peninsula was not less hateful, but the prospect of a successful resistance had, meantime, become faint indeed. Then Ignátieff was at the Home Office and hoped to become Foreign Minister ; Gambetta was alive in France, and Skóbeleff in Russia ; while in England Mr. Gladstone was still free to reiterate the cry of " Hands off ! " to Austria. Now all was changed. M. de Giers had been appointed Foreign Minister ; Ignátieff had retired into private life ; Skóbeleff and Gambetta were dead ; and England (so the Slavophiles argued), having laid hands on Egypt, was no longer free, morally or materially, to interfere with Austro-Hungary in her advance southward.

In May of this year Alexander III. crowned himself Emperor and autocrat of all the many Russias with the most gorgeous pomp and ceremony in Moscow. Schouvaloff, who was to have borne the Standard of the Empire at the triumphal entry into the ancient capital, and who had promised help in every possible way, failed me at the last moment, falling ill in Paris. I was left to do the best I could without him, single-handed, whereas the *Times* reinforced their St. Petersburg correspondent by his able Berlin colleague, Mr. Charles Lowe ; the *Daily Telegraph* sent genial George Augustus Sala and their sub-editor, Le Sage ; the *Daily News* had two good men ; and the *Morning Post*, I think, as many. The *Times* had the very great advantage over all others of having a " special wire " between Berlin and London, which gave their correspondents in Moscow an additional two hours working time ; that is to say, whereas I could not safely telegraph a word later than 10 p.m., my colleagues of the *Times* could go on wiring comfortably up to midnight. The handicap may be imagined, especially in the case of events that took place late in the day. However, I managed to pull through to the satisfaction of my employers, who soon afterwards renewed my agreement for another three years.

The foreign press was royally treated on this occasion. There were some sixty of us, and money was lavishly allotted to all for lodging, board and even driving, though some of us were too 'high and mighty' to accept it. I lodged in the Hotel Dusseaux—the same where Skóbelev had been staying at the time of his death—and was much amused at the stateliness of a stout American millionairess who had very cleverly managed to get the entry to all the ceremonies by procuring the nomination of her husband as minister plenipotentiary or otherwise of the Sandwich Isles! The bear-leader of the party was Mr. Fitz-Henry, the friend of Mr. George Salting. We owe lasting gratitude to both of them for their splendid legacies to the nation, including the charming "rose-bush" Madonna and Child by Cariani now in the National Gallery, but formerly in the Leuchtenberg collection in St. Petersburg, a copy of which I had employed an artist to make for me while those pictures were still inaccessible to the public at large. It flattered my vanity some years later to find when Mr. Salting took me to see his pictures in the rooms he occupied at the top of the Thatched House Club this Madonna amongst them.

No sooner was the Coronation over than an Imperial ukase abolished altogether the transit of foreign goods through the Caucasus—a shrewd blow, avowedly aimed at British trade with Persia, for the benefit of the Moscow manufacturers, and perhaps not without a goodly dose of the feeling "*vous l'avez voulu George Dandin*." The question of abolition had been deliberated upon for months by more than one Imperial Commission appointed *ad hoc*. Opinions were very equally divided. The first decision was actually in favour of maintaining the old order of things, but the Moscovite party redoubled its efforts, and eventually won over the Finance Minister, Abazá, and through his influence gained the final victory. England's trade reverted to the old Trebizond route, and I presume suffered in consequence. The trade in Russian

manufactured goods undoubtedly benefited, and not only in Persia but in Central Asia.

At the end of June, 1883, I left St. Petersburg to join Schouvaloff at Usviát, a large estate he had recently purchased in the province of Vitebsk. What follows I take bodily from the diary I kept during this visit.

29th June. Left Petersburg 1.30 p.m.

30th. Dunaburg (since Russianised to *Dvinsk*); arrived 3.30 a.m.; left 5.30 a.m.; Vitebsk, arrived 1.30 p.m. Post-horses to Suraj, 40 versts. Thence 40 more, with the Count's horses, sent to meet me—all but the first 5 v. through his new estate. Vitebsk is full of Jews, and it being Saturday, most of the shops were shut. The post-master said there had been no *pogrom* here; the Governor took precautions in time. "After all we cannot live without them. Here I am, far from the centre of the town, and I should fare badly were it not for the Jews, who will set up a shop with a few roubles and sell anything and everything you want long before Russians would dream of doing so." At Suraj, also on the Dvina, the Jew at whose house I changed horses would take no payment, much to my surprise, for the bread and milk and *pomerántsevaya* (*nalivka*, understood—crab-apple brandy) he supplied, shared by me with a discharged soldier I had picked up half-way and given a lift to. The Sabbath seemed hardly a reason for this liberality, and I learnt afterwards that he wished to curry favour with the Count, in view of a contemplated deal in wood. The soldier and I hauled the carriage across on the ferry, as the Jews would not work that day. Once over the water the road runs in a straight line—or nearly so—the whole way to Usviát, between double rows of silver birches. This alley or avenue is due to Catherine II., who seems to have given a general order that all roads she travelled on should be thus planted. The command was carried out very partially, as may be fancied; but here, Usviát being the property of her favourite, Potemkin, it was duly fulfilled—or perhaps he gave the original idea. The trees, which must have been replanted at least once, are now failing fast and large gaps disfigure the avenue, for it is long since anyone has cared to replace those that fall.

I reached Usviát at 11 p.m. and found the 'house party' just sitting down to supper after a long day's survey of

the forests—Schouvaloff at the top of the table, his son Andréi on his left, my place reserved on his right, the rest of the company comprising General Bachmánoff, the Count's chief agent; a doctor; a surveyor; Knorre, who is to be head-forester here; Sirius, head-forester from Ruhenthal (Courland); Andréi's tutor; a clerk and the local agent. There is no mansion, only the agent's residence, a one-storied building of wood. But Schouvaloff is already building a largish brick house near by. The situation is good, on a knoll rising, perhaps, 100 feet and forming a peninsula or promontory in one of a chain of lakes that stretches away for some versts on either side. Behind is the overgrown village of Usviát.

1st July. I tried fishing in the river, which runs hence into the Dvina, but there was thunder in the air and I got neither rise nor bite. In the evening there was a sharp storm, and a very peculiar effect of clouds along the horizon—a band of dense inky blue—above which was another band of whitish cloud with smoky downward detachments. I saw teal, with young, on the lake, and wild-duck in plenty. A bittern boomed—the first time I had heard it. The people here call it the “water-bull” (*vodianói buik*) or simply “bull” (*buik*); but the proper Russian name is *vuip*. There are said to be woodcock about, which are called by the Polish name *slomka*, and all the other game-birds usual in the North. There were five bears here last winter; a litter of wolves has been seen lately; and lynxes are not uncommon. A young one was brought in alive to-day.

2nd July. I went with Schouvaloff to visit the forest in a distant part of the estate—40 versts away. We drove 20 v. back along the high road to Pudovka in a lumbering old coach drawn by four horses abreast; there we crossed the river to inspect a small mill, where pulp is manufactured out of poplar-wood, to be used afterwards in the paper-mills at Riga. The produce (and profit) is limited greatly by the river conditions, the water being frozen up in winter and often too low in late summer to drive the turbines.¹ The poplar so far has been held of no value in Russia, though the peasants use it, on account of its superior size, to make their dug-outs, which cost 5 Rs. only, of which one for transport

¹ This industry was then in its infancy. It soon attained very large proportions.

and the rest for 2 men's labour for two days at 50 k. The marketable timber is spruce and pine, of which the former is sold for various countries, the latter for England only—for what reason I cannot tell. It is used there, they say, for sleepers, scaffolding poles and laths. The estate was bought by Mr. Armitstead, Gladstone's friend,¹ or the brothers Armitstead, of Riga, for Rs. 300,000, and sold by them to Schouváloff for Rs. 625,000, they having had the cutting of the timber meantime.² He calculates that the sale of, say, 40,000 trees a year will pay him handsomely (10 per cent. clear), with the other miscellaneous items of revenue. These, however, are small in comparison. Where we went yesterday there is a pine-wood 5 v. square. With the mixed wood next it there are together 1,700 *dessiatines*. We (that is the foresters with our help) made a calculation as to how many trees there are ready for cutting and found 165 to the *dessiatine*, or in all 280,500. But it would be safer to divide this by two, the estimate being a very rough one. Cutting all these there would be a new supply in five years or, more surely, in ten. The capital invested seems therefore pretty well guaranteed. The most serious thing is that the pines are attacked, in places, by the *Korayéd* (bark-eater), a grub which eats away the inner bark and arrests once for all the growth of the tree; which, unless cut down, will decay. The means employed against this pest is to fell one or two trees, which are called "catchers" (*lôvchee dérevo, fang-baum*), whereupon all the neighbouring insects in their winged state collect on them, after which the bark is stripped and burnt. This parasite is peculiar to the pines; the spruces are altogether free from it.³ When a pine wood is cleared—in this region at least—nature replaces it by a thick growth of deciduous trees, of the baser sorts, aspen, alder, birch, etc., which always take root more quickly and grow faster and thicker, than the pines. We ate lunch in a barn, belonging

¹ Afterwards Lord Armitstead, born 6th February, 1824, died 7th December, 1915.

² I believe Schouváloff's son sold the estate for one million roubles, so that the value went on increasing in spite of the timber cut.

³ It is a somewhat remarkable fact that, after thirty-seven years, this method of dealing with the pine-beetle (*Hylurgus piniperda*) is now being applied, for the first time, apparently, in this country, in the New Forest. See a paper by M. H. Rowe in the *Quarterly Journal of Forestry*, July 1920, p. 196.

to an old peasant, who had served at Sevastopol. In one village there is Siberian (cattle) plague, so in all others barriers are put up, and we alone are allowed to pass. I saw two purple Emperors and thousands of a dusky white butterfly, veined all over with black; of flowers the *Iván-da-Mária* (John and Mary: the purple cow-wheat) and the sweet-scented orchis were very common; also the handsome large-flowered hemp-nettle, Jacob's ladder, and a purple gladiolus, fine enough for any garden.

The peasants here at the Emancipation received 5 *dessiatines* each 'soul' and then refused to take any more, having their hands full. They were allowed to choose their own lots, too; so that their rye and other crops and their woods border all the roads, whereas the count's form the 'hinterland' and are much less easy of access. There is no reason here, therefore, to fear agrarian trouble for a long time to come. They are a quiet, orderly people too, White Russians as one can tell by the turban-like head-dress of the women, which is not unlike that worn by the great ladies of England a century ago. The gamekeepers are Letts from Courland. A boat is called here *laiva*, the Lettish name, which the Finns proper, who likewise use it, must have adopted ages since when they were neighbours of the Letts.

At dinner I mentioned having heard that skeletons had lately been dug up in the neighbourhood, supposed to be those of soldiers fallen in battle. The conversation turned, naturally, on Polish insurrections. The last, however, 1863, did not affect this part of the country, and some say that the bones go back to the time of the wars between Stephen Batory, King of Poland (1575-1586) and Ivan the Terrible.¹ The Count spoke of Mouraviéff, with whom he was thrown together at Vilna, as he commanded the troops guarding the Warsaw railway. He had to escort Mouraviéff to Vilna, when the latter was appointed Governor-General; and says that he showed great nervousness, had a pilot train sent

¹ Usviát is first mentioned in the Russian Chronicle in A.D. 1021, when Yaroslav, Grand Prince of Kieff, gave this town (then called Vsiach) to the Prince of Polotsk. In 1228 the Russians here defeated the Lithuanians, who were beaten again at Vsiach by Alexander Nevsky in 1245. Olgerd lived here for a time in the beginning of the fourteenth century. Ivan IV. (the Terrible) ordered a castle to be built at Usviát which was stormed by Stephen Batory in 1580, and destroyed by the Russians in 1654.

ahead, etc., and, on arrival, hurried off in a common *droshky* to the palace. Once there, and all guards doubled, the terror began. He commenced by asking for the oldest cases, and the first man hanged was an unfortunate gentleman, compromised but slightly, who had been allowed for months to be at large and had come to think no more about it. Schouvaloff was disgusted with Mouraviéff's cruelty—and, at last, when he vilified the local police-master for permitting some unfortunate women to weep over the graves of their husbands, sons and brothers, hanged that day as rebels, he went off to St. Petersburg and told the Emperor that he could stand it no longer. Alexander II. said, "Ah! how well I understand your feelings!" and permitted him to remain in St. Petersburg, but, nevertheless, continued to support Mouraviéff. Later, in 1866, when Karakósoff's attempt took place,¹ Schouvaloff, then Governor-General of the Baltic provinces, was appointed chief of the Gendarmerie; General Trépoff, head of the Police; and Mouraviéff, head of a commission to inquire into the conspiracy and unravel it if possible. Mouraviéff lingered over this matter week after week, his great object being to compromise the Poles and the Grand Duke Constantine. "I have no reason to like the Grand-Duke," said my friend, "but this accusation of complicity was utterly devoid of foundation. Karakósoff was tortured by Mouraviéff—in a way—that is to say he was half-starved and reduced to a state of extreme weakness, in the hope that confessions might be extorted from him. I was present at one of Mouraviéff's interviews with him for this purpose. Karakósoff was held up by two gendarmes, being too weak to stand alone. He still, however, denied everything that Mouraviéff wished him to confess; and the latter, beside himself with rage, jumped up and said 'in any case I shall have the pleasure of seeing you hanged!'

"The Emperor, tired of the long delay, sent me to Mouraviéff to tell him he must send in his report. He, perforce, complied; but the report was little else than a long list of persons recommended for rewards in the shape of promotion,

¹ Karakósoff's attempt, the first on the life of Alexander II., took place at the entrance to the famous Summer Garden on the Neva quay, St. Petersburg, on the 4th April, 1866. The assassin fired one shot from a pistol, but a bystander knocked up his hand with a stick, deflecting the bullet, and the man was then seized. Investigation showed that he was one of a considerable band of student conspirators.

orders, etc. The Emperor disliked the idea of such 'blood-money,' but said 'very well; provided I hear nothing more about it.' I told Mouraviéff, who exclaimed: "But what am *I* to have?" He became so importunate that the Emperor consented at last to give him the St. Andrew with diamonds—everything else he had already—but without the usual flattering rescript. I sent him the insignia accordingly, to where he was then living in the country, by an orderly. A few days afterwards, while at dinner with some of the grand-dukes and others, I received a letter from the orderly saying that Mouraviéff had died just before his arrival: to whom should he hand over the packet? This was on the 31st August, 1866, and Karakósoff was not hanged till the 3rd September, so that he out-lived his enemy after all!

"I acknowledge that Mouraviéff was a man of great ability and if left to govern the Poles would have done better by them than his successors, who were merely fools. Some of his admirers used to excuse him, laying the blame for all his cruelty on his wife, who 'was ten times worse than he.'¹ Bezák, who succeeded him, used simply to confiscate any estates that pleased him and hand them over to his friends and relations. He had determined to seize in this way the estate—a very large and rich one—of X——. It came to my knowledge that this unfortunate gentleman was quite falsely accused, having been in the island of Madeira (he was consumptive) at the time when, according to Jewish informers instigated by Bezák, he was seen at the head of insurgent bands in the North-West provinces of Russia. I informed the Emperor, who told me to order Bezák to stop all proceedings in the case. The scene at the interview was striking. It was at my official residence. Bezák objected strongly, but the Emperor's command was absolute. At last

¹ On another occasion (26th February, 1886) I mentioned a notice of Mouraviéff in Prince Meshchersky's *Graždánin* making him out to be the best and most pious of men. Schouvaloff laughed and said, "Well, he was better than his wife, at any rate. When anyone referred to *his* cruelty, those who knew both would say, 'Ah, he's nothing to *her*; quite a good fellow in fact.' She also was by way of being pious."

The Mouraviéff in question (Michael Nicolayvich, 1796-1866) was one of a numerous family several members of which achieved distinction in various ways. In suppressing the Polish rebellion he exercised great cruelty, burning whole villages and exiling to Siberia the entire population, men, women and children, who had survived his military executions.

he said, leaning his face on his hands and looking hard at me, 'Let me have this one estate and you shall do what you like with all the rest.' I rose and bending towards him with my hands on the table (suited, now, the action to the words) said 'I beg you not to make such proposals to me. This man is innocent and the Emperor orders you to leave him alone. As to the other estates you have no right to offer nor I to receive them. I have the honour to wish you a very good morning.' "

Schouvaloff continued: "It is strange to think what happened in the days of Serfdom, so short a time ago! I remember that, when I was police-master, people used constantly to send servants to the police to be whipped; and when I was young, to see a man shaved and sent off as a recruit to the army, for no great fault, was a common occurrence. That meant exile and separation from his people practically for life, as service was then for 25 years. In our own family when we divided certain estates the agent complained that more girls married from our half into the other than *vice versa*, so that their serfs increased at our expense. He proposed that only so many of our women-serfs should be allowed to marry their men as of their women married our men, and the plan was adopted. All this seemed to me only reasonable and natural at the time."

He spoke with disgust of the annual All-souls' day *bacchanalia* at the tombs of the dead, in the St. Petersburg cemeteries, and related how 2 companies of soldiers were sent once to carry out the bodies of the dead-drunk from amongst the graves. They did so and laid them out neatly in rows, in the street. Next year some of the old *búdochniki* ('Wakers,' 'Charlies'), a stupid race, were told to do the same, but they laid the bodies across and across each other in three layers, so that but for timely aid the under ones must have been suffocated.

On Sunday evening we went in four boats for a little duck-shooting—very poor sport, as the flappers can hardly rise on the wing as yet. At the first discharge the doctor massacred one of these innocents on the water and wounded all the occupants of the count's boat—the boatman through the nose, Schouvaloff in the leg, and so on; luckily, no one in the eye, so no great damage was done. We chaffed the doctor unmercifully on this method of obtaining patients. The

second discharge came from Schouvaloff himself, and his shot came rattling into my boat, striking me smartly enough to draw blood from the right ear and back of neck. I had fortunately turned in time, seeing the direction of his aim! Evidently, duck-shooting can be exciting not only to the ducks!

4th July. Last night Schouvaloff related some of his Crimean experiences. He was on Prince Gortchakóff's staff at Sevastopol when the latter succeeded Prince Alexander Menshikoff in supreme command of the Russian forces. "Gortchakóff¹ was a strange figure to look at, considering that he was the General-in-Chief upon whom the fate of Russia depended. Ugly and fat, he wore the St. George's cross on his bare neck and an old forage cap on the back of his head. He went about with an orderly on each side of him, muttering to himself all the time; and was so absent-minded that he would never have got home—or to his destination, whatever that might be—alone. Without knowing it he would turn off to right or left, whereupon the orderly on that side would touch his arm and set him straight again. But he was extremely brave. When the French had taken the Malakoff he went off to rally the troops and induce them, if possible to make an effort to recover it. There was no other chance. He had to cross a bridge under a heavy fire. Two aides-de-camp and an orderly went with him and the little party advanced slowly. Before they had crossed the bridge the prince was already alone; the others had fallen. Two officers from the staff made each the sign of the cross and replaced their comrades. Gortchakóff with the utmost deliberation walked on and reached the main line of defences. The construction of this line was Todleben's great mistake; for, had the troops been in the open they would have gone forward to the attack, but being more or less under cover their officers could no longer get them to move. When the prince called on them they answered *rádi starátsa* ('glad to try') as usual. But all the same they did not advance. The demoralisation was complete. It was then that Gortchakóff saw that an evacuation was absolutely necessary and, returning, gave the order to that effect. The retreat to the northern side was effected under circumstances of terrible grandeur. I was told off to see to the orderly passage of the bridge-of-

¹ Prince Mikhael Dmítrivich, 1793-1861, a cousin of the Chancellor.

boats. This was now no longer supported and guarded by the ships of war, which had been sunk; and what with the weight of the troops and the motion of the waves—for the wind arose—it was under water and only marked out by the ropes on either side. From nightfall the wounded began to cross—a piteous sight—some carried in carts, litters or in anything handy, others limping or crawling, dragging themselves along on hands and knees, groaning and crying. The fire from the enemy's fleet, badly directed, did little real damage but added to the terrors of the scene. Then the unwounded garrison began to follow. So complete was the demoralisation that to keep any order was utterly impossible, and, afterwards, it took four days for the officers to find their men and re-form their regiments. Meantime, the town was burning and the bastions were being blown up, one after another, amidst an infernal fire from the allies. Every now and again Gortchakóff told some officer to take an order to one of those still in command at the fortifications. At last my turn came. I was sent to ask why a certain bastion had not been blown up, and to order its immediate destruction. I got there safely and made this demand of the colonel in charge, who, by way of reply, pointed to hundreds of wounded Frenchmen lying in and around it. What was he to do? 'My orders are absolute.' The Colonel saw that it must be done. The poor Frenchmen, too, soon understood what was intended and began to implore for mercy, that, at least, they might be pitched over the walls, a very considerable height and they wounded! I and my orderly employed ourselves in this sickening work till tired out, and then, perforce, retired. Before I reached the bridge-head again there was a roar, a jet of flame—a mass of falling stones and rubbish—the deed was done! After the evacuation I was sent to bastion No. 4¹ (on the north-side), by mistake, on the supposition that I knew English and might be useful in the event of parleyings. In reality I only learnt English long years afterwards when ambassador in London. The bastion was held by sailors commanded by their own

¹Count Léo Tolstóy was in bastion No. 4 during the siege. See *Reminiscences of Tolstoy by his son Ilya*, London, 1914, p. 17. But that was, doubtless, No. 4 of the main defences facing South, whereas Schouvaloff's No. 4 was north of the roadstead, probably the 'Battery No. 4' of one of Kinglake's maps.

naval officers, whose coolness in such trying circumstances excited my admiration. They were under constant fire, though a weak one; but they had 30,000 *poods* (nearly 500 tons) of gunpowder uncovered, and the men were working night and day at protecting it with logs and earth. I was in this place for nine days, with the probability of being blown up at any moment, and during that time my hair became flecked with grey, though I was only 28 years old, so that when I rejoined my friends of the Staff they were astonished at the change. I freely confess that I was reduced to a state approaching nervous prostration by the horrors of the retreat and this subsequent ordeal, and could with difficulty retain the food I swallowed. But those naval officers ate and drank and cracked jokes as if in their element! At last I received orders to rejoin the Staff, and escaped from the bastion at night, ordering the gates to be opened and then dashing out on horseback at full speed, amidst a shower of bullets, without even an overcoat. The same night an officer was sent to replace me who probably knew as little English as I did. I spoke to him and told him that he would find my room with all my effects in it, to which he was very welcome. Next night a shell burst in that very room and he was desperately wounded. I met him but once again, long afterwards, when we talked over this episode. When I reported myself to Gortchakóff he sent me off at once to meet the Emperor, who was coming south, dressed as I was, without even an overcoat, in order to report in detail the fall of Sevastopol and the Russian losses, his Majesty (Alexander II. who had now succeeded Nicholas I.) having till then only heard of them by telegraph—a pleasant task, truly! These losses averaged during the last period of the siege 3,000 daily. I met the Emperor half a stage from Pultóva; I was so exhausted that I could hardly stand.¹ My brother Paul was there and he found me a place to lie down in; but I was roused up again almost immediately to report to the Emperor, who asked me to return with him, at once, to Nikoláieff, and this, of course, I had to do.”²

¹ There was then no railway south of Moscow. Schouvaloff would have travelled by post-cart, changing at each station, the horses at a gallop all the way.

² Alexander II. went to Bakhchesarai 28th October/9th November to greet the heroic defenders of Sevastopol and stayed there four days. He

Speaking of the battle of the Alma, Schouvaloff said to me: "The conditions were such that after the engagement you had nothing to do but make a ceremonial march into Sevastopol! I myself was sent there to see about the evacuation by the 3,000 sailors who alone garrisoned it! Generally we Russians made the grossest blunders in everything. Of a truth it is very necessary that the Russian God should be a great One, according to the popular saying (*Russki Bogh velik!*)."¹ This led me to observe that at the recent great fire on the Gutuyevsky Island, in St. Petersburg, the boatman who rowed me to the scene in the evening pointed out a little wooden chapel standing unharmed in the middle of the burnt-out space, saying: '*Russki Bogh nye goreet!*' (The Russian God does not burn!). "What chapel?" said the count. "I think one dedicated in memory of some escape of the late Emperor." "I was always opposed to this way of commemorating the various attempts on his life. When I pass the one at the entrance to the Summer Garden and read the text (*Touch not mine anointed*, etc.) and remember that, after all, the Emperor fell a victim to the assassins I feel it a pity that such texts should ever have been put up. What must the Nihilists think?" *General Bachmanoff*: "Well I always had a conviction that they could not harm him, that no attempt would succeed—until I heard of his marriage with 'the Yúrievskaya.' That made a very bad impression upon me." "On whom did it not?" broke in the count. Continuing, *Bachmánoff*, a very dull fellow, said: "I told my wife 'now I should not be surprised if he were killed' and *batz!* came the 1st of March!" *Schouvaloff*: "It is true that his Majesty was completely under her influence: never was there such a moral collapse. Favouritism reigned; only those were employed she smiled upon. Men the most necessary to the country were dismissed from office and soon the Emperor would have been mad enough—I can use no milder word—to crown her Empress. That of itself would probably have led to his assassination."

It seemed somewhat strange to me that after each vain attempt on the poor Emperor's life little chapels were set

had been before this in Nikoláieff, whither he had come from Moscow 13/25 September.

¹ With the Germans, too, God is still a national possession, whereas such a term as "our English God" has, I think, never been known.

up in memory of God's mercy, but when at last he was killed instead of the chapels a large and beautiful church !

We walked about yesterday in a bog, with stunted birch and pine here and there, searching for black-game, but found only one covey, consisting of a hen and two chicks, just able to fly. I was astonished when a double or 'solitary' snipe flew off a nest with four eggs, brown with black splotches on the top. A pale yellow foxglove is common, and the ground in places all purple with the bracts of the Iván da Márya.

Baron Krum called on us yesterday on the way from his estate, 20 v. off. His timber starts down the river Lómach and eventually reaches St. Petersburg, whereas the Count's goes by the river Usviát and the Dvina to Riga, so the watershed must be near at hand.

Schouváloff told us that Dr. Botkin's patients till 1869 were of the merchant class, rather than of the aristocrats. He won his way less by his talent and knowledge which were real than by his great attention to *malades imaginaires*. "My father at last sent for him, and Botkin sounded him all over, even *kájetsa* (I think) his toes ! He spent about an hour with him and left my father in an ecstasy of admiration and delight. From that time he talked of no one but Botkin, of nothing but Botkin's skill, and being Grand Chamberlain he was constantly praising him to the Emperor and Empress (Alexander II. and his wife), who, however, would not hear of employing such an unfashionable person. Then the Empress fell dangerously ill ; she seemed to be fading away. Three doctors were called in but did no good, and at last her state was such that she could not raise an arm. My father then, with difficulty, prevailed upon her and the Emperor to call in Botkin, who came and insisted on sounding her lungs. At first her Majesty refused, but at length consented. He then made her undo her dress and even her *chemise* ; sounded her and went out of the room without a word. Meeting the Emperor he told him that the illness was not at all what had been supposed ; there was some process going on in one lung, the upper part, which any medical student ought to be ashamed not to discover. He advised immediate removal to the Crimea, otherwise death was inevitable. The Emperor said he would propose it to the Empress. When the other doctors heard of it they drew up and signed a written protocol stating that if her Majesty were moved she must die.

Nevertheless Botkin prevailed, and, with the utmost caution the removal took place.

"I was present at her departure. So weak was she that when the crucifix was held towards her she could not bend forward to kiss it; she was to all appearance past recovery. Three days afterwards the Emperor started, I with him, and we overtook the Empress at Odessa. I was summoned to her Majesty's cabin on the yacht and found her quite another person, so much had she improved with the journey, and from this time Botkin was just 'everything' at the Palace. But he had enemies already, and made more; so that when the Emperor was assassinated it was reported, even, that he had refused to come or had delayed coming, that his wife kept him back on purpose, being a Nihilist, etc., etc., though as a matter of fact he was present at the death. He is now ignored."

In the last year of his reign the Emperor summoned Bunge, the Finance Minister, and said: "I am ashamed to do so, but I must ask for one and a half million roubles extra." This was owing to the increase of his expenditure consequent on marriage with the Dolgorúkaya (Yúrievskaya).

At the date of Karakósoff's attempt (1866) the Nihilists were few in number;—from that time they increased rapidly—but every time that Schouváloff called the Emperor's attention to this disquieting fact, and to the danger that threatened, he was treated by others as an alarmist; and the Emperor was only too glad to believe them. Schouváloff at last, after an unpleasant business in which he had to expose certain great people in a matter of jobbery on a large scale, begged to be appointed to London. The position had become irksome, and the Emperor, so far from expressing surprise or regret, said merely, "*Vous voulez me quitter donc?*" and went on to ask: "Who do you think fittest to be your successor?" He replied that he had always thought Albedinsky. What was his surprise, soon after, to hear that Potápoff had been appointed, Potápoff whom he had always characterised to the Emperor as a fool, and who in a short time did actually go out of his mind! "When that happened, my former adjutant, Mézentseff, was appointed—a man equally unfit for the post, whose one idea was that Nihilism would disappear with the creation of a *vsiososlóvny vólost*.¹ He was assassinated,

¹ The *Vólost* or lay-Parish, which forms the foundation of local administration, belongs exclusively to the peasants. The change to a

and then came Drenteln, an honest upright fellow who remarked on this occasion: 'A soldier cannot refuse duty, but it's like throwing a man into the water without asking—can he swim?' Drenteln knew nothing about the business at all.¹ He was shot at by Mirsky. Later there came the Dictatorship of Mélikoff, whose appointment was due to the Dolgorúkaya. Mélikoff's plan was to do nothing, but to make himself popular with everybody and every class. He flattered the grown-up Grand-dukes and -duchesses and caressed the little ones down to the babes in arms. Deputations of merchants, of Old Believers (Sectarians), of all sorts and conditions of men were received with the greatest affability, and came away in childish ecstasy at the promises made them. The nobility were told that they were the bulwark of society; without them nothing could be done—this to my nephew A. A. Bóbrinsky—Zemstvos that they were the keystone of the State; the Jews that they were the hope of Russia; and so on, and so on—*until the first of March!* When I came back from London the first time and found that the Emperor could no longer go about in his own capital without an escort, and saw to whom the reins of government were confided, I felt that he was doomed." Schouvéloff considered that his friend Dmitri Tolstóy's educational system was much to blame. "The Nihilist's best recruiting ground is amongst the poor students. Their poverty is inconceivable." Here the Doctor broke in with the story how he himself, when at the University, was one of those who were often without bread to eat. One day a student said to some of the poorest 'you, and you, and you,' pointing them out, 'will get a good meal if you come to such and such a house on the Vasili Island.' Twelve agreed to go, including himself, but he was delayed and arrived late. When he did get there he asked the woman who opened the door for so and so, and learnt that all had been taken by the police. They were let out soon afterwards but everyone became a Nihilist, though not one had been even a malcontent before!

I added the story of the students who lived in twos and threes together with only one pair of trousers between them, and took it in turn to go out. One such I became intimate

Vsiosólovny Vólost, or one in which 'all classes' would be represented, was the second of the three main Zemstvo reforms advocated in 1915.

¹ See p. 61.

with after he had taken his medical degree. Now, it is, or was, forbidden under dire penalties for a doctor to claim a fee or define its amount. He had just to be content, or seem so, with what was given him. On one occasion my friend after sitting up for several nights with children suffering from diphtheria and saving their lives received from the grateful parents a *plaster bust of Pushkin!* As he said: "It was worth little or nothing to sell, I could not eat it; yet I was literally short of food." Another time he paid several visits in a no less severe case and received each time a silver rouble (2s.) wrapped in tissue paper. When the patient was out of danger he was given the usual packet with polite but firm renunciation of any further services. On reaching home and untwisting the paper he found in it a copper 5 kopek piece (five farthings)!

The Emperor Wilhelm I., said Schouváloff, speaking of the new, much simplified, uniforms of the Russian Army, said that he considered the change a great mistake, one for which the officers as a body would suffer. For many men entered mainly for the uniform—to look at themselves in the glass and please the ladies, but now they could have no such inducement; and those were the very men who in the course of time became first-rate officers.

At one time the Minister of War wanted to establish and subsidise '*tir*' on the Swiss system, and give every man a gun in order to improve the shooting in the Russian Army. Schouváloff opposed this and begged that a competent person be sent to Berlin to learn what the Germans thought on the subject. The report, as he expected, was to the effect that they had no use for men who could shoot independently, for such would think for themselves! "What they wanted was a machine. My brother Paul was once being taken over some barracks in Berlin. Rounding a corner, he saw a serjeant beating a recruit. He thereupon remarked to the German officer of exalted rank who accompanied him that this sort of thing was not allowed in Russia. 'Nor is it necessary,' was the reply. 'You have only to do with your worthy *moujiks*; *aber dieser canaille die haben studirt!*' " ¹

When helmets were abolished the War Minister promised a consequent reduction of $1\frac{1}{2}$ million roubles in the budget.

¹ "These scoundrels are educated men!"

When, soon afterwards, the new *kepi* displeased the Emperor and he enquired what would be the cost of re-introducing the helmet, he was assured again that this would effect a saving of at least 1½ million roubles! "There is always going to be a saving, especially under the present Emperor; but as a matter of fact the expenditure steadily increases."

When Schouvaloff came from London to St. Petersburg in 1877 in the hope to avert hostilities he found that the Emperor, though he still spoke of his love of peace, really wished war. "My representations were obviously distasteful and, after one sitting, Adlerberg said to me: 'My dear Schouvaloff, why do you persist in advocating peace? You only ruin your position with the Emperor by it. He is bent upon war and *has ordered three field-marshal's batons enriched with diamonds.*' Astonished, I asked—for whom? 'Presumably two for his brothers (the Grand-dukes Nicholas and Michael); the other—well, God knows!' *It was for himself!* The Emperor had earned fame by the Emancipation of the serfs and the Great Reforms; he wished now for military laurels; the example of his uncle William had seduced him!"

Talking to N—— who advanced Moscovite, "jingo" theories, Schouvaloff referred to the Crimean War, saying: "It arose from the fact that Nicholas, when Napoleon III. sent a circular to the Powers announcing his elevation to the throne, would not write back 'Dear Brother,' but only 'Best Friend,' which, perhaps, was very high-minded, but resulted in a loss to Russia of half a million men, the destruction of her navy, humiliation and defeat. I suppose that soothes your patriotic feelings!"

"Reutern," he went on, "brought the finances almost to a balance by years of patient administration. He was no financial genius and attempted no great *coups*, but adopted the policy of getting in as much and giving out as little as possible. He was so rude to those who asked for money, even his brother ministers, that for this reason alone they often thought twice before applying to him. When summoned by the Emperor before the declaration of war, in 1876, and told that it was decided upon he was in despair. He declared that it would take Russia 50 years to recover from the effects financially, and that though he could not resign his post at such a moment, for fear of the effect in Europe, he would do

so immediately on the conclusion of peace. And he kept his word." ¹ The present Emperor (Alexander III.) when told that the rouble was falling replied: "Well, what if it is? I do not speculate on the Stock Exchange, so it cannot affect ME!"

Schouváloff assured us that he received instructions from his government before the Berlin Congress to pay no attention whatever to Serbia's claims. Reverting to Dmitri Tolstóy, he said: "Though one of his best friends I disagree with him on many questions of policy. Also he is over-sensitive to attacks in the press. At the time of the failure of the Skopinsky Bank (last year, 1882) some newspaper published a few lines insinuating, or stating, that he had been mixed up in the affair discredibly, had wrongly lent or given to the Bank the money of the clergy. This exasperated him greatly. He told me all about it some four months ago. I advised him to take no notice of it. Next day, again, he began, 'Have you read . . . ?' and soon afterwards he sent for me to tell me that a German paper had reproduced it, and expressed his intention of prosecuting the correspondent, who, as it happened, had signed his name! I dissuaded him."

"Krayévsky, of course, knew as soon as Tolstóy was appointed that his paper, the *Gólos*, could no longer hope to exist; they had always been bitter enemies." Talking of the press generally, Schouváloff said: "I have come to the decided conclusion that either the press should not be allowed to exist at all or it should be free. By freedom I mean that it should be subject only to the laws of the land, applied by the ordinary Courts of Justice. The result of our present system is that the whole press is anti-governmental and that a conservative high-class organ is an impossibility. I myself wished to found one and had consultations with those who think as I do. We were willing to spend money and to dispense with profits but we came to the conclusion that it was out of the question. For, supposing that so long as Mélikoff remained in power I could give vent to my ideas, with the advent of Ignátieff or Tolstóy this would no longer be possible. With each change of minister I should have to change my tone and policy—that is, the paper would. Being what I am I should not even be able to do what Bilbássoff has done for years,

¹ Count Reutern became Minister of Finance in 1862 and resigned as soon as the Berlin Treaty was signed (1878).

namely, hold on by hook and by crook¹ and manage to keep the paper going in spite of all difficulties. The Government in Russia fails to recognise any right of property in a newspaper, and will ruin without compunction its proprietor for expressing views it happens not to approve of. The result of our system is bad abroad as well as at home. The *Gólos* stated, once, that Beaconsfield speculated on the Stock Exchange, which was quite untrue; no Englishman ever accused him of anything of the sort. The English Government complained, whereupon I expressed surprise that Englishmen who valued the liberty of the press so highly, and whose own papers might say what they liked, should expect us to control our press. 'Pardon me,' said Lord Derby, 'here it is quite a different thing. Our papers are independent. Yours are governmental. You have all sorts of machinery expressly for the purpose of controlling the press, and you are constantly punishing and even prohibiting the sale of such and such a paper. It is evident therefore that whatever is allowed to be printed and to circulate bears the stamp of approval by your Government,' and the argument is not unjust; but it follows that we are responsible for a press which is almost invariably hostile to us—an absurd position."²

Vítebsk has no Zemstvo. Schouváloff said: "I could do something, perhaps, to hasten its introduction, that is, to place Vítebsk on the same footing as the interior provinces of Russia (*na obshchee polozhénie*, the general footing); but

¹ Bilbásóff was Krayévsky's son-in-law and editor of the latter's paper, the *Gólos*. His *Life of Catherine the Great* is well known.

² Disraeli writing to Lady Bradford on 30th October, 1876, says: "Schou. called on me with a message of horror and indignation from the Emperor of R. about the *Gólos*. I said I was under the impression that the press was not free in Russia. He assured me that he had been libelled himself in the *Gólos*, and accused of having sold himself to Germany. I remarked that the press was free in England, but that if such an article had appeared in a respectable paper against Prince Gortff. I would undertake to say I would have made the Editor apologise." A footnote adds: "The *Gólos* had the effrontery to accuse Beaconsfield of having in conjunction with the firm of Erlanger amassed a colossal fortune by speculating on the various phases of the Eastern Question! Whereas, as Rose, who had been familiar with Beaconsfield's pecuniary dealings for thirty years, wrote indignantly to Corry on October 25th: 'If ever a man lived who was pure as snow in money matters... it is Lord Beaconsfield, as history will prove.'" In spite of all Schouváloff could do, the *Gólos* repeated its scandalous charges. *Life of Benjamin Disraeli*, etc., vol. vi. p. 85.

I doubt if any advantage would accrue. It would certainly be more expensive; the Zemstvo would levy contributions, and that's about all. And I dare say they would refuse to give me a seat on it on account of the Berlin Congress, just as they refused Tolstóy in Riazán!"

"In England and other countries a verdict of acquittal or the reverse, in case of libel, generally carries with it public opinion. It is not so with us. There is a mad woman, for instance, Leóntieva, who for fifteen years has persecuted me, almost daily, on account of a sum of Rs. 136,000, in bills, which she says were stolen from her by my agents (of the famous Third Section), in Austria, between Lemberg and the frontier. She has written a hundred times to the Emperor, to the marshals of the *noblesse*—here, there and everywhere—to my wife, who probably thought her some mistress whom I had not paid off; and to me, personally, almost daily. She is certainly a mono-maniac and if I brought the matter before a court I should obtain a verdict. But would it be accepted by the public? Not a bit of it! People would say, 'of course the Third Section took the money, and, doubtless, Schouvéloff had his share of it!'" Schouvéloff then referred with approval to the fact that in England, in spite of the great liberty of the press, libels were severely punished; whereas here, the sole liberty the press enjoys is just that of libelling private persons!

To-day being the Count's name-day (the feast of SS. Peter and Paul) occasion was taken to consecrate the new house, the walls of which were now rising from the foundations. An altar was set in the middle of the building, and the service read and sung by a handsome brown-bearded priest, assisted by a boy-choir. By permission I photographed the scene. I hope no one blamed me for bringing bad luck, but no sooner was the house finished than it caught fire and was burnt to the ground.

A neighbour, a retired officer who lives about 20 v. off, sent the Count a *Kholmogórie* cow as a present (a black and white breed introduced originally, I believe, from Denmark or England, through Archangel) excusing his own absence on the score that, yesterday, while bathing in his lake he was severely bitten in the leg by a fish, supposed to be a pike or a *som*.¹

¹ *Silurus glanis*, which haunts, especially, deep pools in dark and sluggish streams and grows to a gigantic size. Specimens have been

12th July. At dinner Schouvaloff condemned in the most unqualified way the communal system of Russia. "Bismarck told me that Alexander II. had, indeed, done a great thing in emancipating the serfs, but, said he, that Emperor would do even more for Russia who should free the peasants from communal proprietorship. At present a commune may convert into personal property the land belonging to it, but a majority of two-thirds is required and there is always a third, consisting of the neediest and most good-for-nothing fellows in the village, that has an interest in maintaining the present system. By simply reducing the majority to one-half much might be done; for many a village would at once abolish the commune and the ministers know this. But they fear the press; they fear Aksákov, who would preach that the commune had existed in Russia time out of mind and that Russia's welfare was inseparably bound up with it—he would call its enemies Germans, traitors, etc. etc. Another reform which, for the same reason, no one dares to introduce, is to take away the right of voting from those who do not pay the taxes. What can be more unjust than that the good-for-nothing fellow who fails to pay taxes and thus throws the burden on his neighbours should continue to have a voice in the communal decisions and in the distribution of the communal property?

"In Courland there are small proprietors but they hold—to take Ruhenthal as an example—from 30 to 60 *dessiatines*,¹ instead of from one to three or five, as in Russia proper. The peasants—apart from the farmers—have no land of their own, but they find plenty of employment; and, indeed, are so much sought after that on the 23rd April, the day of hiring, my agent thinks it important enough to telegraph to me that he has obtained the requisite number of hands! Every year their wages increase and the landowners build houses for them and give them little gardens, to induce them to stay. I think our Government made a very great mistake in adopting the principle that the welfare of the people is dependent on the

caught fourteen feet long weighing as much as 650 lbs. It is sometimes called the fresh-water shark, and by its rapacity deserves the name. It is a popular belief in Little Russia that the *som* sucks the milk of cows standing in water, a belief on a par with that which gives one name to the night jar.

¹ The *desstatine* = approximately 2.7 acres.

ownership of land, and by its measures instilling this idea into, or strengthening it in, the minds of the peasants themselves. In Courland you never hear of farmers being sold up—cattle, ploughs, poultry, etc.—on account of arrears of taxes ; but introduce the Russian system and distribute the land amongst the peasants and in five years that is what you will get.¹

"On my wife's property in the Don country (Orlovka, Daniiovka) when the peasants were emancipated they refused all work, saying 'we are free,' and for a time did little else but drink, so that 30,000 *dessiatines* of good agricultural land went out of cultivation.

"The Caucasus made a very bad impression on me. It is picturesque, wild, beautiful if you like, and no doubt there is great mineral wealth ; but no one thinks of utilising it. The country brings in nothing and when you remember the frightful sacrifices Russia has made to conquer it—including a thirty years war—you are almost inclined to wish that she might retire behind the mountains and forget that the people of the Caucasus exist. In Daghestan there is neither soil nor trees—nothing but rocks, with here and there a village, perched like an eagle's eyrie amongst them. When I went through it (with the Emperor Alexander II.) we used to be met by the local authorities—a dozen or so—behind whom stood the whole male population of an *aoul* (village)—perhaps twenty men ! " ²

¹ The communal system became permissive by the ukase of 9th November, 1906. From this to 1st January, 1914, two and a half million peasants applied for individual holdings.

² The mountaineers must have hidden themselves away on purpose for there are many very populous villages in Daghestan. After Count Schouvaloff's death his widow told me one day, "His letters to me from the Caucasus were extremely interesting, so interesting that I have considered it my duty to burn them !" The pity of it ! I could have had them while he lived for the asking !

CHAPTER IX

Dmitri Tolstóy—His character and policy—My first interview with him—His views on Nihilism—on education—and on liberalism—Orest Miller and Karamzín—Tolstóy and a Russian Constitution—An assassination—Second interview with Tolstóy—Queen Victoria and the prisoners in the fortress—Vera Philpovna—D. Tolstóy described—Mme. Wolkenstein—Submission of Merv—Third interview with Tolstóy—The first Terrorist—Palace and prison—Schouváloff and Alexander III.—A grand-ducal *chasse*—" *Nervousness* "—The Sarik-Turkomans—Nicholas II. and Wilhelm II.—The Afghan Boundary Commission—Ameer's ill-will—The three Emperors meet—The hedging Treaty, when signed?—Opinion of Mackenzie Wallace and others—French politics at fault—Katkóff and Schouváloff—Clever men tell most—" Another soldier for your Majesty !"—Pappenheim principles—The Russian *Index*.

COUNT DMITRI TOLSTÓY, of whom we heard a good deal in the last chapter, was appointed, after Karakósoff's attempt on the Tsar, in April, 1866, chief *procureur* of the Holy Synod, in succession to Count Golovnin, whose liberal tendencies were held to be largely responsible for the growth of Nihilism in Russia, just as Tolstóy's conservative policy was charged with the same result a few years later. Tolstóy was regarded as a champion of Orthodoxy and Nationalism, and it was thought that by combining in his hands the governance of church and of education a stop would be put to the ominous development of revolutionary ideas. He Russianised the Polish university of Warsaw, made the classics the basis of education in the gymnasia and universities of Russia,

and in short stood as the champion of old against new, conservatism against liberalism. He endeavoured to Russianise the German university of Dorpat, the most illustrious in Russia, with partial success, but on recommending its abolition was met by the Emperor's significant caution: "Are you master or am I?"¹ He became Minister for Home Affairs, as already stated, early in 1882.

It was on the 30th October, 1883, that I had my first interview with Tolstóy at the Ministry of the Interior, on the Moika. I had applied for it through Schouvaloff, and Tolstóy agreed to receive me on hearing that I knew Russian. He spoke fluently and with little interruption from me, my mind being largely occupied with the necessity of remembering all he chose to say, so that I might drive home and write it down word for word the moment the interview terminated. He spoke Russian only. I give those passages that seem still to possess some interest. Tolstóy said: "Loris Mélikoff thought that he had destroyed Nihilism and the Nihilist party, but as a matter of fact he left them as a legacy to his successors. Not long ago the police succeeded in arresting Vera Philipovna (Figner), who had contrived to elude their grasp for two whole years. She was the actual head of the Nihilist Executive Committee, and is a woman of extraordinary endowments and enthusiasm. I visited her yesterday in the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, where she is lodged, and I have just been reading her confession. She acknowledges everything, and in the course of two weeks penned this document, which is at once a confession and a Profession of Faith; it occupies a whole volume in MS., and is so well written—though, of course, from her own particular point of view—that I am very sure there is no official in my ministry who could write as well. You have heard, no doubt, various

¹ *Distinguished Persons in Russian Society*, Smith, Elder & Co., 1873, p. 267 seq.

reports, mostly exaggerated about the propaganda in the army. Vera Philipovna did, in fact (finding that the people could not be worked upon—the peasants have in several instances taken the propagandists and handed them over, bound, to the authorities), conceive the design of preparing a military insurrection; and, choosing the regiments stationed in the south of Russia, contrived by the charm of her physical and intellectual endowments, and aided by another woman, to win over many officers, chiefly in the Mingrelian regiment stationed at Tiflis. The number of officers arrested up to now amounts to forty (this, of course, has been multiplied many times by report). They belong exclusively to the class we call, satirically, *Bourbons*, who are little better than *moujiks* in education and knowledge. They are all 'army' officers (that is, belonging to line regiments). It is absolutely untrue that any single guard officer has been arrested for Nihilism. . . ."

"Nihilism is a disease. It is the moral cancer of our time. You can no more stamp it out or abolish it than the Hebrew leprosy, but the one and the other may be reduced to comparative harmlessness. Granted that the ulterior object is political, the means they employ are those of highwaymen. . . ."

"As to the universities, the whole of this education question is not one between classical schools and modern, between Greek or Latin and technics: it is a battle between industry and idleness, seriousness and frivolity; and, unfortunately, our history has been such that numbers are on the side of frivolity. To take an historical retrospect. Peter the Great introduced foreign manners, customs, habits, etc., but the spirit was wanting. He could clothe men—that was the tailors' job; cut off their beards—by help of the barbers; but the men remained what they were before, what history (the result largely of race, climate and soil) had made them. Look at the Academy of Sciences, our 'French Academy.'

Peter founded it in the last year of his reign (1725). . . . He undertook to establish an Academy of Sciences when there was not one elementary school in the country! The men of learning were non-existent; he sent for half-a-dozen from Germany. But what was the good of men of learning without disciples? teachers without pupils, professors without students? So students were sent for too! Then there must be an university, and an ukase ordered twenty 'candidates' of the Preobrajensky regiment to constitute it! Of course it was a perfect sham! From that time to the present day parents have been accustomed to look upon education as nothing more than a means to get boys into the service of the State, civil or military, as soon as possible. And the less they have to learn the better they like it! If it were proposed to teach Chinese one hour a week they would be delighted, and would be all for Chinese learning. I once asked the late Emperor if he wished to do something that would earn him the gratitude of every mamma and papa in Russia. He jumped at the suggestion. 'But how?' 'Let examinations in future be confined to reading, writing and the four rules of arithmetic!' The main reform in the new Code, as you know, is in regard to examinations. There are two kinds of university, those which, as in Germany, are independent of the State, and those which are not. Ours are founded and supported by the State, yet the State has little or nothing to say as to the management, but is reduced to the position of nourishing institutions only fertile in opposition to itself. Why should the university have the right of giving entry into the public service? I say: Let the State itself examine into the fitness of those who wish to serve it. Those who cry out against the measure, the mammas and papas of whom I spoke, and the professors who are interested in maintaining an autonomy, call this a retrograde measure, an anti-liberal one. My definition of liberalism and the only one I admit is that

which is for the common benefit. This is in the best sense a liberal measure ; it gives full liberty of teaching. A boy may learn how he likes and what he likes. But if he wants to enter the public service he must show the State that he is fit for it. The universities can continue to give diplomas of honour, but they will no longer control the entry into the public service. I know that people say that Nihilists are produced by the difficulty of the courses ; but you cannot ensure that every boy will succeed, and this did not produce Nihilism before. My own son is twenty-one. I might have sent him from school straight into the army, and he might have been a *flügel-adjudant* already, but I preferred to send him to the university, where he now is, in the second course.

" Under the old system professors themselves examine those they teach ; 'hand washes hand,' as we say in Russia. Moreover, they elect their own colleagues, and many of the best are kept out. Liberalism in Russia means independence of the Government. Anything will serve, however manifestly bad, provided that the State has nothing to do with it ! Orést Miller, lecturing, declares that Karamzín (the historian) was a *podléts* (scoundrel), he whom we had all been taught to venerate.¹

" At Kazán they give degrees in law, though there are no professors of criminal or any other jurisprudence !

" Professors teach just what they like, and you cannot be taught what you want to learn unless it happens to suit your professor. When the State undertakes the

¹ Orést Miller, b. 1833, an Esthonian German, was baptised into the Orthodox Faith by Platón (see p. 84) at the age of fifteen. He became celebrated as a lecturer on history and as a Slavophil, opposed to Katkóff. He wrote and lectured much, but his claim to remembrance rests on his unbounded charity (*Caritas*), above all to the students of St. Petersburg University whose Benevolent Society he founded. As an expounder of folk-lore and folk-songs he was led far astray by the mythological school, but his name will endure as that of one " who loved his fellow-men," who, to the day of his death (in 1889), lived up to the motto he had chosen : " Better help ten who deserve it not than risk neglecting one case of real distress."

examinations the force of public opinion will compel the teaching of what the State examiners demand."

The last subject to which I referred was the rumour as to the granting of a Constitution current in the European press at the time. The count said it was entirely imaginary, mere rubbish (*vzdor*). "The Emperor never entrusted me with anything of the sort, and if he had I should have refused to undertake it, because, in the present condition of Russia, a constitutional *régime* is simply out of the question. What do our Kirghiz, Bashkirs, Kalmuks, etc., know about constitutions?" And, he might have added, what the Russian peasantry?

In the last week of 1883 Colonel Soudéikin, acting chief of the Secret Police, was barbarously murdered in St. Petersburg, being first shot in the back, and then battered to death with crowbars by Degáyeff and other Nihilists. Degáyeff had turned informer, and had betrayed several of his fellow conspirators, notably Vera Philipovna, who had taken part in the assassination of Prince Kropótkin in Kharkoff. He now, probably under compulsion, betrayed Soudéikin, who had latterly trusted him implicitly. The murder created a sensation throughout Europe; but the police, and notably Plehve, afterwards so well known,¹ were very reticent about it, and finding it difficult to get any authentic details I applied to Count Tolstóy for another interview, which he at once granted me (5th January, 1884). He gave me the fullest possible description of the whole affair, and this was printed in the *Standard* (11th January). At Tolstóy's request I spoke of him only as "an official of the first rank," and I omitted for obvious reasons to

¹ Plehve now became Director of the Department of State Police (Ministry of the Interior); next, Assistant Minister of the Interior (or Home Affairs), and finally Minister. He was blown to pieces by a bomb on 28th July, 1904, in the streets of St. Petersburg. He was Tolstóy's choice, a man after his own heart, who by his reactionary policy and ruthless measures did more than anyone else to drive liberal Russia to revolt.

say that I had mentioned in the course of conversation certain letters that had appeared in the Nihilist press making grave allegations as to the treatment of prisoners in the fortress of St. Petersburg, adding that I personally knew that they had made an impression in the highest spheres abroad. (The Queen, for instance, had written privately to Sir Edward Thornton about them, and he had asked me to help him, as I did on this and another very delicate occasion, in obtaining the information her Majesty desired.) Tolstóy said : " Of course they are all lies ; some one is now engaged in refuting them. The prisoners are only too well cared for, as I myself witnessed ; so well that I should not mind being there myself. Thus Vera Philípovna amuses herself writing verses, though, naturally, she is not allowed to send away anything unopened. I obtained permission for your countryman, Lansdell,¹ to visit the fortress, you remember ? " " Yes, your Excellency ; could you not do as much for me ? " " Not just now (smiling) ; but I will before long."

This I knew to be humbug, because the Nihilists were about to be transferred to the fortress at Schlüsselburg ; but it would not do to say so. I had to think of the *Standard* sometimes !

I also refrained from publishing the following brief sketch of the redoubted minister which I wrote at the time :

" Tolstóy is a quiet little man, middle-aged, with colourless, parchment face, like so many Russians, the result, largely, of living always in hot, dry rooms. He wears a small moustache, no beard or whiskers ; he has brown hair turning grey and good-humoured eyes. He was dressed in an old brown jacket. He moves slowly, without any sign either of uneasiness or of vivacity. He is very courteous, and his courtesy is of a genuine kind, not like the suave exquisite polish of so many Russian officials, barely disguising their wishing you to the devil."

¹ The Rev. Henry Lansdell, author of *Chinese Central Asia*, *Russian Central Asia*, etc., etc.

I asked: "Is it true that they left a letter saying that your Excellency and General Gresser¹ (Prefect of St. Petersburg) would be the next victims?" "No, there was no letter, but they sent a short proclamation by post to me and to some others. I will shew it you." He got up, took an envelope from a drawer, and handed it to me. It was addressed in a scrawling hand to His Excellency the Minister of the Interior, and contained, wrapped in a piece of blank paper, a half-sheet with the following poorly printed in the middle of it: "To-day were executed by order of the agents of the Executive Committee of the *Naródnaya Vólya*, Lieut.-Col. Soudéikin, chief of detective police and the detective who accompanied him. St. Petersburg, 16 Dec. 83." In handing it to me the count said: "You had better be careful; it may be poisoned; these fellows are capable of anything. My people tell me that I must be cautious." I smiled, read the document, and, putting it back into the envelope, returned it to Tolstóy, who put it again in the case. He then took out a photograph and handed it to me, saying: "That is Degáyeff, and ten thousand copies of it have been distributed over Russia. You see, it is a very ordinary face; he looks like some petty shopkeeper, and there is nothing about him to indicate the traitor and assassin." "No, indeed, but as he is known so well, surely he will be caught?" "I don't know; I confess I should be glad of it, but they are very clever at disguising themselves, and doubtless by this time he has cut off his beard and mustachios and altered his *coiffure*, so that he may not be recognised. What makes us indignant is the barbarous way in which they murdered Soudéikin; really, mere hanging seems too good for them. Think how Soudéikin

¹ The famous Russian clown, Dúroff, "scored" delightfully off Gresser at about this time. He brought into the arena, at the fashionable "Circus" one night, two trained pigs, one small, one big, and introduced them to the public with the words: "*Dies ist ein kleines Schwein—das ist Grösser!*" The audience sat convulsed; soon all St. Petersburg was laughing. Poor Dúroff was exiled and ruined.

suffered, and his nephew much more ; whereas the utmost these murderers have to fear is being hanged, having their breath cut short." (With an explanatory grasp at his throat.) " No, there are no traces of them yet ; the other four were probably called to St. Petersburg especially for the murder, from Kieff or Kharkoff." " I could not help thinking, when in the streets looking at the funeral procession ; that they were perhaps there ; and I looked into the faces of many men, scrutinising them." " Yes, it is very likely indeed. It is said, from psychical observation, that the murderer cannot help coming to the funeral of his victim. There is some extraordinary attraction, or, rather, fascination.

" I am aware that they wish to kill me too ; but then I am a fatalist. I take no precaution myself, though, of course, my people do, such for instance as letting no one in unless known, and sending some one behind me with a revolver when I go out. My theory is that if a man is determined to kill you at the sacrifice of his own life he *can do so*, and no precautions will avail, though it is not, therefore, necessary to neglect them. Soudéikin warned me repeatedly, lately, telling me, even, that it might happen at my weekly receptions ; and on the very day of his death he expressed to others the greatest anxiety on my behalf." " But even if you are shot at, Excellency, you need not be killed ; these people generally miss ; look at the case of Mladétsky, of Solovieff, and of many others!" " Yes, quite so, and up to the present I have the feeling that if I am fired at the bullet will miss." ¹ " Will the Emperor still come to town ? " " Certainly, at the end of this week." " Will Vera Philipovna and the officers and others be tried ? " " Yes, but it is a complicated affair. Take this woman Wolkenstein, for instance ; we cannot try her for her intentions, though there can be no doubt as to their nature. She came back and told the Nihilists that she was ready to undertake any terrorist

¹ Tolstóy died a natural death.

work they liked. This we learnt from Degáyeff. She is a very nice-looking woman of twenty-five years of age, so was only twenty-one when Kropótkin (governor of Kharkoff) was murdered. She harboured the murderers, and, afterwards, escaped abroad. She came back this time from E. Roumelia. When arrested she was examined by Gresser, and I stayed in the room as if a casual visitor, she not knowing me. She tried to brave it out at first ; stated that she was a Bulgarian, and had learnt Russian so well by living in a Russian family there. Asked to give their name she gave one, and said they had estates in —. We telegraphed at once, and found that no such people or place existed. When two sisters-in-law identified her she still denied it ; then we brought up her husband, a doctor, from Kharkoff, and, bringing them suddenly face to face, this woman, who knew that recognition would be fatal to her, could not resist the natural impulse, but threw herself into his arms, crying : ‘ Ah ! Sáshenka, how is Kola (her baby) ? ’ then saw that she had betrayed herself and was furious. She will be tried for the Kropótkin affair : the proofs are all ready. She is of much the same type as Vera Philípovna, young, pretty, clever, gay—neatly dressed in black with a little white *ruche* round her neck.” “ Can nothing be done against Lavróff in Paris ? ” “ Nothing ; the proofs are wanting, and, besides, the French Government would not give him up, nor would England. Indeed, nothing can be done against these people until England makes a (European) convention against them.”

The year (1884) began well for Russia with an event of no little importance—the unconditional submission of Merv. An expedition had been sent out from Askhabad in December, 1883, ostensibly to protect the Persians against the depredations of the Merv Tekkes. Major Alikhánoff, an Avar of Daghestan, pushed on to Merv with twenty-five Cossacks, bearing an official letter to one of the Khans. On the 3rd January the Khans of

the four tribes arrived in Askhabad and swore allégiance to the Tsar in the presence of General Komaróff; but the news was only made known in the middle of February. It would have been well, indeed, had England accepted this natural and inevitable result of Skóbeleff's victory with calmness and dignity instead of making it the text for exasperating and quite useless recriminations, which only encouraged Russia to accelerate her onward movement towards Afghanistan.

I had another interview with Count Tolstóy at the Ministry of the Interior on 12th February on the occasion of the *Times* publishing a Nihilist communication in favour of Necháýeff, a prisoner in the fortress, and a leading article on it.

He said, amongst other things: "I cannot understand a Conservative organ making itself the mouthpiece of the Nihilists. The Conservative party, it is true, has always been hostile to Russia and the Liberal inclined towards us. Pitt was against us and Fox for us. It is an historical phenomenon (*istoricheskoe yavlenie*); but that a great Conservative [*sic*] paper should publish such infamous falsehoods is a little too much.

"When the great powers agree to give up these political murderers we shall have some chance of coping with them, but at present each government wages warfare single-handed, whilst the enemy is banded together. Austria is very much inclined to such a measure and Germany too, but they wait for England to take the initiative. Of course England need not give up a man who has merely written something against the Government, but only one who has actually committed a murder, though with a so-called political motive. If the Great Powers agree it will be easy enough to coerce that miserable little Switzerland, where at present you can see the murderer of General Mézentzeff living quietly with a Jewish woman, who passes for his wife but in fact is only his mistress. *At the worst one could send a company of soldiers there!*"

"Did you read what was said of Necháýeff?" "Yes, monstrous! He was the man who incited the student riots here in 1876. What really did happen was that when Potápoff (and this Schouváloff can tell you) was appointed chief of gendarmerie he went to the fortress and inspected the prisoners in the Alexeyeff Ravelin. When he entered Necháýeff's cell the latter, who was a perfect scoundrel, suddenly, without any provocation, boxed Potápoff's ears.¹ You may fancy the effect on the police authorities present! He was immediately put in irons, but Potápoff ordered them to be taken off, saying that he considered it a punishment from God and wished no vengeance taken on the man. I went to see Necháýeff one and a half years ago, but did not enter the cell lest he should spit at me. He could be held, of course, but not muzzled. However, I looked through the little hole in the door—a square—and observed him at my leisure. He was a little fellow, very dark, and ramped up and down the cell not like a man, but like a tiger in a cage. He died in the fortress. He had bought some of the soldiers of the guard, and through them (poor devils, they have been sent to Siberia for it) communicated with his friends outside; and so well-informed was he that he heard of the Emperor's assassination an hour after its occurrence."

"Is it true that he actually planned the assassination?" "It is very possible; he was an awful scoundrel (*merzávets*)!"²

¹ The Nihilists said that Potápoff urged Necháýeff to betray his party.

² Necháýeff was the first of the Russian revolutionaries to preach and to practise Terrorism pure and simple, void of all scruple, the end—destruction of the existing order—justifying all means however horrible. The models he held up were Macchiavelli in politics, the Jesuits in morals, his formula being "*pour le corps la violence; pour l'âme le mensonge*." He shocked even his fellow assassins by his extreme views and alienated the majority of them by the murder of a comrade, Ivánoff; so that when in 1873 Switzerland extradited him, he had already for some time been living in isolation. When, however, the assassination

"Are the prisoners from the St. Petersburg fortress going to be moved to Schlüsselburg?" "Yes, as soon as it is ready for them. Room has been prepared for fifty. There are only ten in the Alexeyeff Ravelin [which had a very sinister reputation]—all people who have been condemned to death and let off with life imprisonment. I shall go up and inspect the place myself. The Emperor does not like their being here, so near the tomb of his father, and indeed it is somewhat incongruous." "Yes, it reminds me of Venice, the palace and the prison on each hand." "I remember; and the *ponte dei sospiri* between." "When will the trial come off?" "Not for some time; there will be Vera Philípovna and a dozen more; probably in May."

He talked of Schouvaloff, and said what a pity it was that he would take no part in affairs. The Emperor, through him, Tolstóy, had offered Schouvaloff the presidency of the Department of Laws in the Council of State, but he had refused it. "Did he not preside over it *ad interim* two years ago?" "Yes, but his Majesty would not then confirm him. Now he won't take it." Note that Alexander III., the patriot Tsar, made this offer to a man the chauvinist press branded as a "traitor to his country!"

On 28th March I went shooting with Schouvaloff, the other guests being Pólovtséff (who was soon to be the richest man in Russia, inheriting through his wife the Stieglitz millions,¹ and the Emperor's brothers,

of the Tsar was in preparation (1881) so important to the party had he become even in prison that Jeliáboff was in doubt whether priority should not be given to an attempt to rescue him and only decided the point negatively at Necháýeff's own demand. Under the name of Verkhovenski Necháýeff figures as the hero of Dostoyévsky's novel *Byési* (Les Possédés). See an article in the *Mercure de France* for Jan. 1920 by J. W. Bienstock.

¹ Stieglitz was a banker ennobled as Baron by Nicholas I. in 1826. He was married, but had no children. One morning a fine girl-baby was left on his doorstep. He adopted the child and made her his heiress. She married Pólovtséff.

Vladimir and Alexis. I was introduced to them, of course, and talked a good deal with the latter, but grand-ducal conversation is not often interesting.

It took seven horses and as many men to bring our breakfast or luncheon from St. Petersburg and prepare it in a gamekeeper's lodge—turtle soup, sterlet in aspic, fresh lobsters from Heaven knows where, etc., etc., and champagne in floods. When Schouváloff and I went alone a bottle of claret or madeira and some sandwiches sufficed; we preferred it; but the Grand-dukes expected this sort of thing, and as the elk we were after got away, it was well they had something to please them. Schouváloff mentioned my photographing a bear, and Alexis begged me to get him a camera which he could use *without any learning*—a very grand-ducal request, with a happy prevision of "touch the button and we do the rest" in it.

In March, already, trading caravans left Merv in all security for Khiva, Bokhara and Meshed. A Russian caravan at the same time left Askhabad for Bokhara. The reign of the robbers that had lasted for centuries was at last over—thanks to Russia. But England grew more and more nervous or Mervous, as the Duke of Argyle wittily said. Early in May, Lord Granville, in the House of Lords, had to answer enquiries regarding Sarakhs, and the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* thereupon gave the following explanation of the misunderstanding that had arisen:

"The name Sarakhs is applied as a matter of fact to two places quite distinct the one from the other. There is a new Sarakhs situated on the left bank of the Tejend, and occupied by a Persian battalion; and on the right bank there is a mound called Old Sarakhs. The latter is completely deserted; the Merv Turkomans used sometimes to take up their quarters there in course of their expeditions to Persia, but they were never established there."

I added that the most recent Russian map of Central

Asia carried the Russian frontier from this point southwards to within forty versts of Herat, and continued: "In any case it is absurd to suppose that, once having occupied Merv, Russia can stop short of some natural boundary. It is easy to rule a straight line on the map between, let us say, Sarakhs and Khoja-Saleh, but the country through which it passes being for the most part a barren steppe inhabited by nomad tribes, it cannot possibly determine the ultimate limit of Russian extension towards Afghanistan, nor is there any reason to believe that the Russian Government intends for a moment to lower itself to such a transparent deception."

This was not, unfortunately, the view either of the paper I represented or of the British Government. Prince Dondukóff-Korsákoff was at this moment on his way to Merv, which he reached on the 14th May. I had already stated on good authority that the submission of the Merv Tekkes had been followed by that of other Turkoman tribes. The accuracy of this information was very roughly denied by the semi-official *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, which went so far as to say that it was "*tout simplement fausse*." Yet on the 18th May I was able to quote a letter from Askhabad in the Tiflis paper, *Kavkáz*, as follows :

"Respect for the power of Russia is very high in the southern half of Central Asia. From all sides deputations from the unorganised semi-nomadic tribes pour into Askhabad with offers of submission. Of these, the one which attracts most attention is a deputation from the Sarik Turkomans, the next neighbours to Merv, who live on the Youlatan oasis near the Afghan frontier.¹ This deputation arrived on the Saturday in Passion Week, and awaited the coming of the Prince-Governor, who, be it observed, is also Commander-in-Chief in the Trans-Caspian district. The submission of the Sariks to

¹ The *Official Messenger* of 14th July, 1884, stated in reply to the *Moscow Gazette* that the Sariks who had become Russian subjects inhabited the Youlatan oasis, "the southern limit of which is 100 versts from the Afghan frontier and 270 versts from Herat." There were other Sariks at Penjeh.

Russia, is, of course, the direct result of that of Merv, and is important to us, because part of them were always at strife with the Mervians, and because the very fact of their submission brings us up to the organised State of the Afghans, with whom we can confidently negotiate."

That same day the Tsarévich, afterwards Nicholas II., came of age, that is to say, he attained the sixteenth anniversary of his birth, and the Crown Prince William, afterwards German Emperor, came to St. Petersburg in honour of the occasion. Who could foresee the tragic figures they would become! The central feature of the ceremonial was the oath of allegiance sworn by the heir-to-the-throne to his father. It was a touching as well as a very brilliant scene, and when the Empress Marie kissed her son there were few dry-eyed amongst those present.

I sent, of course, a full description of all this and of the great popular fête on the *Champ de Mars*, and the *Standard* in a leader next day, after referring to the coming of age, went on to deal with the situation in Central Asia as revealed by my telegram, the article concluding with the words :

"The recent conquest of the Tsar unquestionably places him on the threshold of Herat and confronts him with an abiding temptation to transgress the dividing line. It is for English statesmen to see that timely steps be taken to bring the defensive resources of British India within easy reach of the part where danger lies."

Now, unfortunately, the "dividing line" was one of the vaguest description, and in order to determine it, Russia, at England's urging, consented to the appointment of a Joint Boundary Commission, the result being a tragi-comic interlude which in less than a year brought the two countries to the very verge of war.

On June 20th intimation was sent to the Ameer that the Commission was to be appointed. On July 7th the English papers learnt that the appointments on both

sides had been made, and that Abdur-rahman deigned to look upon the Commission most favourably. This turned out to be the very opposite of the truth. The Ameer proved openly hostile; he put every possible difficulty in the way; he refused to guarantee the safety of the British members of the Commission; and the Indian Government had to submit to the humiliation of choosing a line of march that carefully avoided, until it reached the Helmund, the territory of the Prince whose country we had undertaken to defend and for whose benefit, ostensibly, we were now entering upon the arduous and costly task of delimitating his north-western frontier! In Russia, meantime, there was considerable criticism directed against the home government for its too great compliance with English demands. Thus the *Nóvoe Vrémya* of September 3rd, in an article on the Afghan Frontier Commission, professed inability to understand why England was allowed to interfere in the matter at all! Russia and Afghanistan were neighbours and independent States; they should be competent to settle their common boundary themselves. It was too late now, indeed, to object, as the Commission was about to start; yet it was not only legitimate but necessary to protect Russia against the evils that might arise from the bad precedent thus created.

Warned and inspired by the chauvinist party, whose feelings were thus voiced in the *Nóvoe Vrémya*, the Russian Government, or, at least, the Russian military authorities, delayed sending their Commission to meet ours during several months; and, meantime, the situation, locally, grew more and more favourable to Russia, the danger of armed collision between Russian and Afghan ever greater.

On September 15th took place at Skierniewice the meeting of the three Emperors, at which they ratified the formal document signed at Berlin on the 21st March. Thus without any modification of the Triple Alliance

which was directed against Russia, the old Three Empires League which included Russia was revived. Germany and Austria were now doubly protected; France, on the other hand, completely isolated. It was stated that the foundation of this agreement was laid when de Giers told Bismarck that Russia abandoned all opposition to the permanent occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria. Good authorities have thought that the secret, "re-insurance," Treaty between Germany and Russia, the existence of which was first alluded to in Bismarck's organ, the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, October 24, 1896, was concluded at the same time; but we now know that it was not so.¹

It should not be forgotten that the *rapprochement* between Russia and the German allies was made possible solely by the chaotic state of party politics in France and the utter discredit with which the Republic was threatened by the scandalous scenes at the Versailles Congress (4th August).² Yet, all the while, the instinct

¹ The late Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace wrote to me on the 10th August, 1915: "Not long ago I questioned Steed [acting Berlin correspondent of the *Times* in 1896] as to the precise date of this treaty, and he replied 'I have always been under the impression that it was concluded in 1884 and lasted till 1890, when, after Bismarck's fall, Caprivi and the Emperor refused to renew it. The refusal was explained by Marschall von Biberstein in the Reichstag on 16th Nov. 1896 by saying: In our treaty of 1879 with Austria we are pledged to assist the Monarchy with our whole armed strength if it is attacked by Russia. . . . But if the revelations are accurate, the Re-insurance Treaty with Russia might have brought us into the position of being asked for benevolent neutrality by the one party and for support with our whole armed strength by the other.'

"Now, to return to the date of the Treaty: Saunders in his *Last of the Huns*, p. 63, says it was concluded in 1887, but when I questioned him on this point he could not give me satisfactory proof. My present opinion is that it was signed at Skierniewice during the meeting of the Three Emperors in September 1884, and that it was renewed in 1887 for three years, at the expiry of which, Caprivi and the Emperor William II. refused to renew it again." But see p. 300.

² Tumultuous scenes took place at this French Constitution Revision Congress on the above date, a full account of which will be found in the *Times* of the following day. De Blowitz wrote: "On entering the hall I found a collection of explosives and madmen . . . A foreigner

of self-preservation in France and Russia was slowly but surely tending to bring about first an understanding and eventually an alliance, in spite of republican follies, in spite of Bismarck's cleverness in exploiting them, in spite of English hostility, and of the natural antipathy between an unlimited autocracy and a liberalism that went the length of openly championing anarchists and regicides.

On December 24th, Katkóff called on Schouváloff. He complained that Drenteln, then Governor-General of Kieff, took the part of the students and intrigued against the Rector. D. Tolstóy and Delíanoff (Minister of Public Instruction) tried to get him reprimanded or even turned out, but the Emperor decided against them. I could not but admire the way in which the Tsar took his own line and held to it, quite irrespective of Liberal, Conservative or Slavophil influences and clamour. It is worth noting that Katkóff, though Schouváloff was out of office and in disgrace with the Moscow party especially, took the pains to call upon him and tell him his troubles!

I lent Schouváloff the late *Poslánie*¹ (Message) to read, telling him that it compared the Stundists to the Nihilists. "Stuff and rubbish," said he; "they are rather our Radstockists."

About this time I went out shooting several times with Schouváloff, mostly to Vártemiaki. On English Christmas Day (1884) the party consisted of the old Grand-duke Michael, General von Schweinitz, Pólovtseff, Pappenheim, A. A. Bóbrinsky and wife (Pólovtseff's daughter) and myself. Conversation is, naturally, for the most part constrained when royalties are present. However, Schouváloff being host we were never dull long. On this occasion we had lunch in the shooting-lodge. In the

might have thought the men before him were lunatics at play." It is not irrelevant to recall that on that very day England secured her liberty of action in Egypt.

¹ Pobyedonóstseff's? I have lost the reference.

course of conversation Lord Dufferin was referred to. He used to act in charades at the Embassy and, as some one now recalled, was much laughed at for doing so. Schouvaloff turned to von Schweinitz, not without a spice of malice, and asked him if it were true, "as Lord Dufferin told me," that his Excellency, as *doyen* of the diplomatic corps, had remonstrated with him for acting a pig in a charade, saying that an ambassador could not do such things; whereupon Lord Dufferin had answered: "Perhaps every ambassador cannot, but an English gentleman can!"

Von Schweinitz was very much put out by this story and, turning purple in the face, denied it vehemently, spluttering out: "If he had say so I would have kick him in ze stomach!" He failed to turn up at our shooting parties for some time, being, it was said, much offended. The loss was not very great. He cannot have been stupid or Bismarck would not have employed him; but in the five years during which I met him at these shooting parties I seldom, indeed, heard him make any remark of the slightest interest.¹ He usually confined himself to "Yes" and "No," the former predominating, to remarks about the weather, etc. He was always polite, but never cordial; who could be, with such reticence, the most unamiable of qualities? In his case it was due no doubt to excessive caution, the refuge of diplomatists who are not particularly clever; and then it must be remembered that he served a hard master. In my experience as a correspondent I found it the rule that the cleverer the man the more he told me.

The most unprofitable, perhaps, were those who combined good-nature with lack of real ability and self-confidence. They were always wanting to do you a kindness, but seldom did it because they feared the consequences. It was curious to watch the conflicting emotions that disturbed them when one asked a favour, the

¹ The one exception is given on p. 292.

revelation of some secret—*de polichinelle* often enough. The gravity and alarm that passed over their faces as they put themselves at once on the defensive ; the fleeting wish to comply, the fear of results, the distress at having to refuse, the anger—half with you, half themselves—at the predicament they were in ; then the apologetic humility as—the point being lost—you changed the subject or took your leave ! Or they told you something really important, but under promise of secrecy “ for a day or two,” and before your lips were unsealed the news came out through your rivals !

Now Lord Dufferin and Sir Robert Morier knew what to say and what to keep back. They had no fear, because they were self-reliant men, secure in the possession of a power to gauge honesty and good sense in others. Wherefore they helped you freely when they could ; and their conversation never lacked interest. I speak of General von Schweinitz as I usually met him, in the society of Russians of rank and fellow-diplomatists. At home, in his family circle, he was the most amiable of men ; his agreeable American wife, many years his junior, presented him annually with a bouncing boy baby, and on each successive occasion the proud father would telegraph to his Imperial master : “ Another soldier for Your Majesty ! ”¹ He was a good sportsman, too, in the stiff German fashion, a fair shot and not jealous.

Count Max von Pappenheim was head of that famous family, and a nephew by marriage of Schouvaloff's. He was passing the winter in St. Petersburg, and afforded no little entertainment to Court and diplomatic society owing to the extravagance of his social pretensions, coupled with a good deal of innocent simplicity. The Grand-duke drew him out at dinner about the many uniforms he carried about with him, the Pappenheim house-uniform—whatever that may be—and Heaven

¹ Where are they all now, I wonder, those flaxen-haired boys?

knows what besides. He was a member of the Upper House in Bavaria. "Do you speak there?" asked the Grand-duke. "No, oh no, I prefer to keep silent." "You do very wisely," at which Max bowed, thinking it a great compliment. The night of his arrival he sat next to von Schweinitz at dinner—at the Bavarian legation—and launched out violently *against the Prussians*!

He came to Russia in search of a rich wife, "not for myself but for the sake of my family, you know." Indeed, the sacrifice involved in marrying "beneath" him, he being a "mediatised" Count—it reminds one of what made the Cheshire cat grin—was to him a very real one, involving demission from headship of the family.¹ One night Peter, Paul, he and I were left at Vártemiaki, and we sat dining and drinking. Max, it appeared, had almost quarrelled with his cousin, Count A. A. Bóbrinsky, for advocating "socialistic principles" as he called them, really a very mild liberalism. Of himself he said: "I am an aristocrat of aristocrats and willing to shed my last drop of blood for aristocracy!"—rising—"I drink to aristocracy!" To the dismay of Count Paul, having emptied his glass—Bohemian, of some value—he dashed it on the floor. "Hi! what are you doing with my glasses?" Hereupon ensued an amusing scene, Count Peter wickedly drawing him on till he became furious, crying: "You talk about glasses when I talk about principles! What do I care for glasses?" (smash goes another!) "But the glasses are ours!" "You talk about glasses! (smash!) I will break a hundred glasses! (smash!) When I talk about principles I don't care how many glasses I break!" "But I do!" "Yes, that's Russian!—thinking about glasses . . . no," glaring at me; "*it's English!*" Kitchen tumblers were now brought in, and Peter received a formal challenge to fight his nephew next morning. But, just when I feared

¹ He faced it manfully, with what result is duly recorded in the *Almanach de Gotha*.

something really serious might happen, Max turned pale and left us abruptly—to sacrifice not his principles but his dinner !

He would drive up and down the Nevsky or the yet more fashionable Palace Quay dressed up in a *shinél* (caped cloak) with high fur collar and a white astrakhan cap of exactly the pattern worn by Grand-dukes and some other generals, except that instead of their badges he had the Pappenheim crest or initials affixed to the white fur in front. Nothing of him was visible but eyes and nose. Of course all the police and soldiers and most of the officers saluted him, to his extravagant delight.

We became good friends, he and I, during his stay in Russia—but I carefully avoided the subject of aristocracy ! In the course of the fun, Count Peter told him that Bismarck had said to him of Bavaria : “ The fruit is not ripe ; it will fall of itself ! ” which of course added fuel to the flames.

My first conversation with Tolstóy might have gained in interest had I known that by a decree dated that very day (January 5th) the following modern books, amongst others, were not to be allowed in the reading-rooms and public libraries of Russia, viz. : Translations of works by Agassiz, Bagehot, Huxley, Zola, Lassalle, Lubbock, Lecky, Louis Blanc, Lewes, Lyall, Marx, Mill, Réclus ; besides Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and all Herbert Spencer's works ! But the decree was only made public in August.

CHAPTER X

Extradition (political) between Russia and Prussia—All quiet—Herat—" *Nos frontières marchent avec nous !* "—The Boundary question—Crisis reached—Grave situation—Bismarck and England—" *Cela ne se passera pas sans coups de fusil* "—Warlike preparations—Abdur-rahman at Rawul Pindi—The Penjdeh battle—Press-fury—Gladstone's great service—Sham arbitration—War averted—A forecast fulfilled—The Tsar's gratitude—The Sea-canal—Mr. Stead's disillusion—A trip to Harraka—A tiresome telegram—A delicate matter—Sir Edward Thornton leaves for Turkey—Tsar and press—Lord Salisbury takes office—My appointment to Berlin cancelled—E. F. Law and Colonel Ivor Herbert—Von Plessen—With the Tsar in Finland.

THE year 1885 opened peacefully enough, with little to suggest the violent spasms that were to convulse the world ere it closed.

On the 13th January notes were exchanged between the Governments of Russia and Prussia—not Germany—signed respectively by de Giers and von Schweinitz, for the mutual extradition of persons suspected or guilty of high treason or anarchism. Such subjects, of either country, were to be surrendered "on demand." The hope was semi-officially expressed in Russia that similar conventions would in time be concluded with other European States—a pious wish that has so far not been gratified. There was nothing at all exciting in this, except, perhaps, for Nihilist circles, and the few brief entries in my diary show how abnormally quiet we were just then :

7th January. The Russian Government treats the people like children. This very fact is a tacit admission that the

system cannot last. For children grow up ; if parents are wise they train them to stand on their own legs, in due time, and (vital point) recognise that time when it comes.

3rd February. Went shooting with Schouvaloff, von Schweinitz, Campo Sagrado,¹ Narishkin² and Pappenheim. Rain, snow, wind ; roads atrocious. Drove through Riábo-lovo and Lépsaari. Wolves gone ; elk broke away ; no sport, no conversation. Russia is at present thawing after a 200 years' frost of autocracy and serfdom : result—clouds overhead and slush underfoot !

Then, suddenly, on the 14th February, a report reached London that the Russians were advancing on Herat—a report without a scintilla of truth in it, emanating, probably, from a German source. Funds, and especially Russian stocks, fell sharply in the capitals of Europe, and in a moment the Afghan crisis of 1885, that was to come within a hair's-breadth of provoking European war, cast its ominous shadow upon us. The statement reached St. Petersburg on Sunday the 15th, and spread rapidly. On Monday the official press made no comments, no attempt to explain or deny the report ; but the *Nóvoe Vrémya* declared categorically that Herat was still in Afghan hands, and that Russia had undertaken no serious steps in that direction.³

This assertion in itself, of course, was worth little or nothing, but it happened to be true. On the other hand, there was reason to surmise that Russia would be fully satisfied with little less than the natural frontier afforded by the Parapamisus, a line of hills which passes within twenty-five miles of Herat ; and, on the principle that possession is nine points of the law, it was only too likely

¹ Spanish ambassador, a man of enormous bulk and great charm of manners ; a grandee and married to an infanta, I believe, but very much *en garçon*, in St. Petersburg, and always *criblé de dettes*. His popularity was such that when he finally left St. Petersburg he was driven to the station by the livery-stable keeper, to whom he owed a large sum of money, with his smartest turn-out and very best pair of horses.

² See p. 342.

³ See map p. 230.

that the cossacks of General Komaróff were already bivouacking on or about the outermost northern slopes of these hills, within, say, fifty miles of the Afghan stronghold. As a Russian officer of high rank cynically explained: "*Nos frontières marchent avec nous!*"

Two days later the semi-official *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* affirmed that the Herat rumour was a *canard*, but quoted with approval the *Nóvoe Vrémya* article referring pointedly to the long sojourn of the British force (some 400 men) near to what it was pleased to call the Russian frontier, and to the British Commissioner's munificence and its unfortunate effect in emboldening the Afghans, declaring that if England should prove powerless to restrain them, Russia would be compelled to rely upon her own resources, *i.e.* do so herself—all of which, considering that Sir Peter was kept waiting at the appointed *rendezvous* by the non-arrival of his Russian colleague, may be called not very just.

On the 23rd of February, I pointed out that the claim to Penjdeh—meaning the oasis of that name—was perhaps the most serious point in the Russian proposals taken to London by Lessár for the instruction of M. de Staal, the Russian Ambassador; for, the north-western part of the frontier between the Murghab and the Persian boundary, being but barely indicated in Lord Granville's Agreement with Prince Gortchakóff of 1873,¹ the necessary delimitations would probably give rise to no little difficulty. The omission was a very unfortunate one. Had this

¹ This Agreement is contained in the despatches interchanged between Earl Granville and Prince Gortchakóff (through the intermediary of Lord A. Loftus, our ambassador in St. Petersburg, from October, 1872, to January, 1873. See *Annual Register*, 1873, Appendix: correspondence with Russia respecting Central Asia). It is strange that Lord Fitzmaurice, in his *Life of the second Earl Granville*, London, 1905, makes no mention of this very notable Agreement, though he refers to the correspondence. The two principal documents, Lord Granville's letter to Lord Loftus of the 17th Oct., 1872, and Prince Gortchakóff's letter of the 31st Jan., 1873, are given in an *Appendix* to Mr. Angus Hamilton's *Afghanistan*, 1906.

portion of the frontier been even roughly defined it is possible that much of the trouble of 1885 might have been avoided.

My Berlin colleague added fuel to the flames next day by telegraphing :

"Every well informed person here regards it as certain that Russia will reject the proposed Afghan frontier delimitation and will make a descent on Herat early in spring."

I did what I could to advance the plain but disagreeable truth that Russia held the long trump, and, however the game might go at first, was sure to win in the end, in proof of which all that was necessary was to take a map and trace out any practicable frontier between the Russian possessions and Afghanistan. Russia had conquered or absorbed the three Khanates of Khiva, Khokand, Bokhara ; the Turkomans even where not yet her subjects were her willing aiders and abettors ; the country in dispute was desert or oasis ; no obstacle of Nature, no hostile race stood between the Russians and the goal of their desire. It was too late, now, to think of keeping them from the dreaded approximation to the territory of our *de facto* vassal the Ameer ; so that it was really only a matter of details, the importance of which was at least open to question. Russia declared that she had no intentions against Herat, and, in spite of the vapourings of the press, this declaration was probably sincere ; but whether we agreed to the line a little north of the Parapamisus eventually accepted, or insisted on tracing a frontier some fifty or sixty miles further back, would in the end make little difference. What Russia strove for, what she valued, and what she meant to have, as I had pointed out once before, was a position in relation to Afghanistan which would enable her at any time to suggest the advisability of retaining Indian troops in their own country instead of organising an inconvenient excursion into Europe, and for this the actual possession

of the mountain passes, however desirable, was not an actual necessity.

On the 27th an inspired article, communicated simultaneously to the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* and the *Moscow Gazette*, put forward Russia's claim to delimitate according to actual Afghan occupation, which happened to coincide with the ethnographical distribution of the population. "Mr. Lessár found no single Afghan at Penjdeh last year. Russia has therefore a right to expect that the oasis of Penjdeh should become hers."¹

The *Standard* thereupon published an article explaining the claims which Mr. Lessár had been instructed to put forward :

"His proposed frontier is strictly ethnographical"—as if that were a crime—"It ignores all geographical considerations as completely as it does the political necessities of either the Ameer or the Indian Government. Russia is seeking to absorb the Sarik districts round Penjdeh and on the Kushk stream, and this she hopes to accomplish through the instrumentality of Mr. Lessár."

And that is precisely what she eventually got without the slightest evil effect for Afghanistan, for India, or for England !

On the last day of the month the *Standard* gave prominence, under the heading ENGLAND AND RUSSIA, GRAVE SITUATION, to the following announcement :

"We have reason to believe that Her Majesty's Government are resolved not to yield to the claims which Russia has put forward with regard to the Afghan frontier. Lord Granville has intimated his intention to insist on his Agreement with

¹ "Panjdeh, as the home of the Sarik Turkomans is called, is not a village or a town, but a long narrow valley, some twenty-five miles in length and averaging about two miles in breadth, containing a series of hamlets of Turkoman *Kibitkas*. There is not a house in the place." *Northern Afghanistan, or Letters from the Afghan Boundary Commission*, by Major C. E. Yate, C.S.I., Blackwood & Sons, 1888. But Penjdeh is marked as a village, a few miles up the Murghab from Pul-i-Khisti, on all our maps, including those of Major Yate himself. I use the name in both significations, but I hope without ambiguity.

Prince Gortchakóff as a basis for discussing the line of the definitive frontier ; and the Government are further prepared to resist a forcible annexation of Penjdeh on the part of the Russians."

Probably this was meant as a warning. It was taken, not unnaturally, in Russia, as a gross provocation.

In the same issue appeared a very frank and extremely important speech by Bismarck upon England and her ways, especially her very foolish way of conducting diplomatic intercourse with Germany. This, of course gave Russia no little encouragement, and, probably enough, it was meant to do so.

Indeed, the conduct of this Russo-Afghan embroglio on the part of England, and its issue, can only be understood by the light of our relations with other European Powers, and especially with Germany, at this time. Bismarck was the enemy of England, not of Russia ; he was pursuing with all the energy of his nature, all the power of his intellect, the end of German colonial expansion. England's troubles made his opportunity ; nor can we blame him for taking advantage of them, for making, in particular, a dexterous use of French jealousy of England in Egypt, a jealousy that made possible the continued existence until March 3rd, 1885, of the Ministry of M. Jules Ferry, "whose self-imposed mission it had been to stir up trouble in every part of the world against Great Britain."¹ Lord Granville was convinced that the procrastination of the Russian Government in regard to the mission of General Zelenói was the result of the tacit approval of if not the actual suggestion from, Prince Bismarck.²

Again : "In order to be free to face Russia effectually

¹ Lord Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 420.

² General Zelenói was appointed chief of the Russian mission, as General Lumsden was of the British ; but, whereas the latter reached the locality agreed upon in November, 1884, Zelenói had not put in an appearance in February, 1885 ; meantime, the Russians were stealthily creeping southward.

in Central Asia, the restoration of good relations with Germany was the immediate and most pressing necessity of the hour—Germany held the key of the situation.”¹ Lord Granville, writing on the 9th March, 1885, to Lord Fitzmaurice, says: “Count Münster and Count Herbert Bismarck not long afterwards (*i.e.* in the summer of 1884) told me that the German Government could not maintain a friendly attitude on Egyptian matters if we continued to be unfriendly on colonial questions,”² which, in plain English, meant, of course, that for not making trouble for us as to Egypt Germany demanded a price and a heavy one in New Guinea and elsewhere, a method of procedure which in private life is called by the ugly name of black-mail, but in international politics is too common to merit special opprobrium.

Gordon set out for Khartoum in January, 1884, and was killed there a year later (January 26th, 1885). Egyptian affairs tied our hands; and in judging the Liberal Government's treatment of the Central Asian question it is only fair to bear in mind that it was beset, throughout, by embarrassments and dangers arising from the ill-will of various Great Powers other than Russia, skilfully fomented and taken advantage of by Prince Bismarck. Nevertheless, when all excuses are made, it seems difficult to acquit Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville of weakness and indecision.

The danger of a collision between the Afghan and Russian forces had now become evident.

France looked on anxiously, and her press warned England that a war might be more serious for her than for Russia. On the other hand, the *Nóvoe Vrémya* (somewhat late in the day) saw now the hand of Bismarck in the growing dissensions between Russia and England, and warned the British Government against the malicious designs of the Chancellor.

¹ Lord Fitzmaurice, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 429.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 424.

From Lord Fitzmaurice's book ¹ we know that on the 4th of March the Queen, herself, went the length of sending a telegram to the Tsar expressing her great anxiety at the news from the Afghan border, and begging him to do all he could to avert the misfortunes that might follow from a conflict between the Russians and Afghans.

The inability on our side to balance things fairly is shown, I think, in a passage in the *Standard's* leader of 6th March: "If General Komaróff withdraws his men from Pul-i-Khatun to Sarakhs, General Lumsden *might be permitted to request* the Afghan commander to march his troopers back to Herat." The italics are mine, of course.²

On 6th March I sent a long and angry despatch, my telegram having been held up and even mutilated by the censor. I stated that a conflict with the Afghan outposts was foreseen, as might be judged from a phrase lately current in St. Petersburg and attributed to a personage not unconnected with the Foreign Office: "*Cela ne se passera pas sans coups de fusil.*" This, if I remember rightly, was Jomini.

War with England the Russian Government was very far from wishing, but frontier brawls need result in no such catastrophe, whilst some there were who deemed that their effect on Russia's claims might with dexterous management be rendered decidedly favourable, as eventually happened.

Meantime, the press on both sides became more and more bellicose; we soon heard, openly, of military preparations in Russia and in India, the latter including an ostentatious gift of artillery to the Ameer; but, above all, the local position had grown worse; for Russia having

¹ *Life of the second Earl Granville*, vol. ii. p. 423.

² Now that the *Standard* is defunct it may be wondered why I quote its opinions so frequently. The mere fact of my having represented it in Russia would, of course, be no justification. But in those days the paper was undoubtedly in close touch with important sources of information in London.

occupied Zulficar, Ak Robat and other places up to Ak-tepi, just north of Penjdeh, the Cossacks or Turkomans and the Afghans were actually face to face. As the *Republique Française* wrote: "The freak of a captain or even a N.C.O. in command of a Russian outpost might lead to the outbreak of hostilities between the two rival nations." The Russian Government, however, gave categorical assurances that no advance would be made beyond the frontier claimed in the memorandum handed to the British Foreign Office by M. de Staal, nor upon Penjdeh itself. There remained the danger that General Komaróff—the wish being father to the thought—might suppose that the orders from St. Petersburg were not to be interpreted too literally, and in that case there was little room for doubt that a conflict would ensue at or near Penjdeh, the results of which might well be disastrous. Mr. Gladstone at this time amended Lord Granville's phrase—an advance on the part of the Afghans "would not be made," to "could not be sanctioned." Evidently, we were uncertain of controlling the Afghans.

The Slavophil-Moscovite party was now raging, and war between England and Russia might break out at any minute.

On the 22nd March orders were received in Calcutta from England to concentrate from twenty to thirty thousand men at Quetta; and five days later the Army Reserve and Militia Reserve were called out in England. The following day, the 28th, the Viceroy arrived at Rawul Pindi to greet Abdur-rahman.

On the 5th April I wrote:

"Russia is making preparations to meet the contingency of war with England no less earnestly and rapidly, but much more secretly":

and in its leader of the 8th the *Standard* stated:

"It would be premature to say that the negotiations between the Governments of England and Russia have

absolutely broken down, but unquestionably the relations between the two countries have reached an extremely critical stage."

That same day, it being the Wednesday before Palm Sunday, I had been invited to make the round of the Fair with the Ambassador's son and daughters. On the vast *Champ de Mars* at the back of the embassy—Prince Soltikoff's house facing the Neva just above the Trinity bridge, then a bridge of boats—the holiday-makers swarmed. There were theatres, circuses, raree-shows, jugglers' booths, cheap-jacks crying their goods, vendors of toys, of live and stuffed birds, old books, articles of dress—in fact anything and everything—but above all food and drink in unlimited quantity and at popular prices. Innumerable flags, the many-hued kerchiefs and petticoats of the women, the red shirts of the men, and the varied uniforms of the soldiers gave extraordinary brilliancy and colour to the scene. The noise was deafening; the Russians have big voices, and many men had obviously had more than enough to drink already; but, as usual, the utmost good-nature prevailed. The Russians (of those days) when drunk wanted to kiss, not quarrel. The animation was at its height when, towards half-past four, we decided to enter one of the circuses. My companions were already inside; I could see through the half-drawn curtain of the tent the conventional lady in short flounces on a broad-backed white horse jumping through paper hoops held up by a clown. At this moment I felt a light hand on my shoulder, and, turning, saw Whitehead, one of the secretaries of our Embassy, my friend and neighbour,¹ our apartments at that time opening opposite each other on the staircase of No. 13 Milliõnnaya. By nature he was quiet, reticent, self-contained, and all he now said was: "If I were you I'd go to the Embassy," but it was said so meaningly that without one word I went off, as fast as the crowd would

¹ Now Sir James Beethom Whitehead.

allow me, to that edifice, not two hundred yards away. Passing through the double entrance-doors I asked the hall-porter: "Can I see his Excellency?" Before he could answer, Sir Edward himself appeared half-way up the staircase, coming from the Chancery. He caught sight of me, and said in a tone of hopeless despondency: "Come up, Baddeley, come up; I see that you have heard the news." I ran upstairs, saying: "I only know that there is news—grave news." "Yes, I have just seen de Giers. There has been a battle at Penjdeh—the Afghans were defeated and five hundred of them killed. *Some of our officers were present.*" I realised, of course, at once all that this might and probably would mean. Thornton went on: "There is nothing to do but to pack up; war is inevitable; I shall be told to demand my passports to-morrow." Then something flashed through my brain, and I said: "Is it as bad as that? *After all, Gladstone is in power.* Don't you think he may manage to find a way out?" I am rather proud of my instant appreciation of this one possibility of preserving European peace but Sir Edward would not hear of it. He had striven honestly, indefatigably, to avert war. Now, when all his efforts seemed to have been made in vain he, for the moment, gave way to despair. However, I had my work to do, so, thanking him for his kindness, I drove off to the Hôtel de France, and, with the aid of the Swiss manager, drew up a despatch in French, about French Rentes or something similar, conveying the message:

"Battle fought: Murghab river: Afghans defeated: 500 killed."

This was sent to a private address in Paris, and reached London the same night, with only one mistake. The cipher for "Afghans" got mixed up so that Mudford had to guess which side had suffered defeat, and guessed wrong. However, that made little difference. The *Standard* prefaced my message with the words:

"We have received from a correspondent who is entitled

to the highest credit the following telegram which has been forwarded to us in cipher in order to evade the Russian censorship: "

and continued :

" For obvious reasons we are unable to mention the name of the place from which the telegram was despatched. The message itself is vague, inasmuch as it is not clear whether it is the Russians or the Afghans who have been defeated. At the same time, having regard to the origin of the telegram, we assume that it is the Russians who have suffered a reverse.

" However, that is not the important point but the fact that a fight has occurred at all."

The *Standard* rightly assumed that the scene of the occurrence was Penjdeh.

The day that the news became known in St. Petersburg, the 8th, a Durbar took place at Rawul Pindi, at which the Afghan Ameer and the Duke of Connaught sat on either side of the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin. The battle had been fought on the 30th March.¹

Thanks, once more, to my code and to my unwilling friend the censor, who drove my colleagues to the verge of madness by refusing absolutely to let one word about the battle pass, my message was the first and for some hours the only intimation of what had taken place throughout the world.

In a long open telegram sent the same day—of course without overt reference to the fight—I gave my views—a way I sometimes had—as those of a competent non-Russian resident, developing the idea I had expressed to Sir Edward Thornton, and maintaining that " it is England who will give in eventually, for all her bluster."

On the London Stock Exchange the effect produced by the *Standard's* announcement, though serious, was not

¹ The *Annual Register*, strange to say, gives on the same page the dates 29th and 30th March, each, categorically, as the day on which the fighting occurred. Lord Fitzmaurice, also, has the 29th.

disastrous. The news was not fully credited. But, about 11 a.m. the *Daily Telegraph* brought out a special second edition with full confirmation. The result is described in an article in the *Standard* of the 10th :

" One has to go back fifteen years (*i.e.* to the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war) to find a parallel to the excitement and crash produced on the Stock Exchange by the telegram published in the *Standard* of yesterday announcing that the Russians and Afghans had begun to fight. Stocks did not fall in the ordinary sense ; they crumbled and collapsed : " etc.

Consols fell $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The *Standard* in its leader called for war. " One word more and only one is needed. That is, a declaration of war."

When Gladstone, in the House of Commons, summing up the evidence, described the attack on Penjdeh as " having the appearance of an act of unprovoked aggression," a hearty and unanimous cheer burst from all parts of the House. It had that appearance. Mme. de Névikoff lays stress on the unjust occupation of Penjdeh in June 1884 by the Afghans, and regards this as completely justifying Russia ; Mr. Stead, of course, backed her up, but as nine months had elapsed since then, during which negotiations had been proceeding almost continuously, and as Russia had by way of answer occupied Pul-i-Khatun, there was *prima facie* justification for England's attitude ; and Gladstone, who cannot be accused of ill will towards Russia, to the end of his days held that in this matter he had been treated unfairly.

My own deliberate opinion after all these years is that Komaróff, backed by the military and chauvinist party in Russia, was keenly on the look-out for any good pretext for an attack. Without it, under orders from St. Petersburg, he might have refrained ; but the Afghans, emboldened by the presence of British officers, gave the pretext by crossing the river in force—they had previously had merely an outpost on the south side of the Khushk river—and he at once availed himself of it.

Schouváloff had left for Ruhenthal on the 9th April to stalk capercailzie and look after his estate, I, of course, being unable to move. A rumour at once got about that he had been despatched to London on a mission of conciliation, the *Nóvosti* on the 13th having a leader based on this supposition, which I contradicted.

The tone of the St. Petersburg papers—to say nothing of Moscow—became now one of unbounded arrogance. English threats and warlike preparations were treated alike with scathing contempt, and there is a melancholy interest to be derived, in these latter days, from the fact that they anticipated then all the *schadenfreudig* vaticinations of modern Germany at the commencement of the Great War as to the fate of England. In the event of war India would rise to the last man against the hated English; Australia was preparing to throw off the heavy yoke of the mother country; the United States would take Canada; the Boers the Cape, etc.—in short, the British Empire would fall to pieces without a blow.

The press on either side lashed itself into ungovernable fury, and if war was ultimately averted it was in spite of the utmost efforts of these precious “organs of publicity.” Mr. Stead was, admittedly, an exception; but, unfortunately, his personality and methods more than nullified his endeavours in favour of peace, while the caustic writing of his ally O. K. (Mme. de Nóvikoff) in all probability made more enemies than friends for Russia; the average Britisher being neither a Gladstone, a Froude, nor a Kinglake.¹

In a telegram to the *Standard* of the 22nd April I put Russia's attitude clearly and succinctly:

“We will argue about territory,” say the Russians, “as much as you please, but anything like an ultimatum or categorical demand for satisfaction we cannot and will not admit.”

That was what the Emperor thought and said; that was, as events proved, his very last word. Our answer

¹ All of whom were zealous supporters of O. K.

was the vote of eleven millions—how absurd it sounds nowadays, less than two days' war expenses!—but then it had something at least of the intended effect. It is my personal belief that in proposing the credit, as he did in a speech of matchless eloquence, Gladstone was thinking far more of placating his own countrymen—at their own expense, of course, like the starving Irishman on the desert island who cut off his dog's tail, made soup of it and then threw the dog the bone—than of frightening Russia. At all events it did the one and did not do the other. Gladstone was a very astute person indeed, with every possible information at his disposal—a fact I insist on in view of what comes next.

That night I was present at a *roué* at the German embassy, and involuntarily a vision of the Brussels Waterloo ball came to mind. There we all were, men and women of many nationalities, smiling and chatting, exchanging the usual banalities, but everyone present knew that the peace of the world hung in the balance, and now and again one caught furtive glances at the would-be expressionless faces of Russian officials and British diplomatists.

The tension was so great that, evidently, it could not last; the chord must relax—or break. Then, on the last day of April, England proposed arbitration. The news reached St. Petersburg on the 1st May, and a Council was immediately held at Gatchina. I dined that evening at the embassy, and remember well the sigh of relief with which my kind host gave me the facts—though he knew, none better, that we were not yet out of the wood.

What happened in those next eventful days has never been fully told. That England proposed arbitration and that the Tsar—somewhat ungraciously—accepted it was made public, and has never been contradicted. In reality England proposed arbitration and the Tsar flatly refused it. His words were: "*General Komaróff acted rightly. I will never allow his conduct to be submitted to*

arbitration." That, to all seeming, put an end to the matter. War, surely, was inevitable.

It was then that Gladstone showed what he was capable of, and in so doing fully justified my venturesome suggestion to Sir Edward Thornton on first hearing from him of the Penjdeh battle. He asserted categorically that the rejection of arbitration meant war, immediate, inevitable war; that the English Government did not want war, wanted in fact only to co-operate with the Russian Government in finding any honourable way of escape from it; and he begged the Tsar in the interests of peace and of humanity to consent to the appointment of an arbitrator, who, after all, need never arbitrate. Alexander III., in his honest, dull and obstinate way, took some time to adjust himself to the point of view thus forced upon him. But, finally, he consented to agree, openly, to arbitration by the King of Denmark, provided that in no case should the matter proceed any further. In short, the *English Government offered and the Russian Tsar agreed to a sham arbitration*. Gladstone's purpose was gained. Some days had passed. Liberal feeling, at least, soothed if not satisfied by the magnificence of having voted eleven millions sterling of (our own) money, had rapidly cooled down, and was already inclined to accept any reasonable compromise. The Tsar's consent was taken as a satisfactory solution of the difficulty, and the danger of war was averted. Lumsden was at once recalled, and though the Jingo press, including my own paper, wrote bitterly and furiously of this "fresh instalment of humiliation" (the acceptance of arbitration), and of Lumsden's recall, the nation as a whole, with astonishing light-heartedness, turned its attention to other things.¹

¹ Lord Granville had no little trouble with the irascible soldier: "Sir Peter Lumsden was loud in his complaints, and continued them on his return to England. There was another side to the question and Lord Granville, as he informed the Queen, thought it right to tell Sir Peter that the tone of many of his communications had been such as

Lord Morley has written a full and admirable life of Gladstone—but the reader will seek in vain in its pages for any light on this remarkable episode, than which none in the whole course of the great leader's career discloses so completely his own mental agility and at the same time his perfect power of gauging the public mind. And, perhaps, none deserves more grateful recognition on the part of his countrymen. He understood them—better than they understood themselves, with their foolish cry for war; misled by "experts," forsooth, who saw the loss of India in the extension of Russia's boundaries to Afghanistan. He had learnt from Sir Edward Thornton what the Tsar would and would not concede. He consented to sham arbitration—who will now condemn him?—and saved England from the shame and the horrors of another and, if possible, more stupidly wicked Russian war.

Telegraphing on the 7th I said :

"The acceptance of the last English proposals is a mere blind—a farce played by both Governments in collusion. The recourse to arbitration is a golden bridge which Russia was much too politic to refuse her enemy when driven at last into a corner. But what does it come to? The question to be submitted to the King of Denmark or whoever else may undertake the thankless rôle of arbitrator is simply whether the agreement of the 17th March was broken or not. Well, the Russian Government will maintain that General Komaróff acted in accordance with his instructions—a theory in support of which the most irrefutable evidence will be adduced. The blame, if any, it will take upon itself; but who can bring it home? As a matter of fact the only result of the enquiry if ever it takes place, will be to show that England and Russia interpreted differently the meaning and scope of the agreement and there the business will end. I do not believe that it will come even to such a lame conclusion as that. Much more likely is it that England will eventually declare herself satisfied

in a rather long official experience he never remembered as between an officer employed and his official chief." *Life of the second Earl Granville*, vol. ii. p. 441. Very shocking, indeed!

with the further evidence produced and let the whole matter drop. . . .

" . . . The most laughable part of it all is that both sides or rather—counting the Ameer—all three, have declared their indifference to the possession of Penjdeh ! This being so the chances are that it will be handed over to Russia who will give up the pass of Zulficar. The Penjdeh incident will be allowed to drop, under cover of the merest pretence of arbitration, and the frontier will follow very nearly the line claimed by M. de Giers. Russia will get, territorially, nearly all she ever wanted and much more than she expected ; and prestige such as no power has had in Asia since the days of Timur the Tartar. What England gains beyond an additional 2d. or 3d. in the £ on the income tax I am unable to tell you."

This forecast was fulfilled to the letter.

It was May 4th when Gladstone announced " that the impediments to a friendly correspondence with Russia had been removed, and that the two Governments had agreed to refer any difference which might be found to exist to the judgment of a sovereign of a friendly State." *From that day to this not a word has ever been heard of the arbitration !*

Feeling revived somewhat in certain quarters when on May 18th the *Standard*, with the comment " the whole thing is incredibly bad and humiliating for England—we have been over-reached," printed my translation of the Tsar's Imperial Rescript to Komaróff and in a leader called for a vote of censure on the Government :

" In recognition "—so this document ran—" of the excellent measures taken by you as Commander of the troops of the Murghab Division and of the equal foresight and decision exhibited by you in the action against the Afghans, also in recompense of the courage and valour shown by you in the affair of the 18th March at Tash Kepri ;¹ we have graciously been pleased to confer upon you a gold sword, enriched with diamonds, and with the inscription for valour, which we send you herewith, remaining well disposed in Our Imperial graciousness towards you.

" ALEXANDER, Gatchina, 2/14 May."

¹ Tash Kepri is a little north of Penjdeh.

After all these alarms of war, it was pleasant on the 21st May to join the party Sir Edward had invited and steam down the Neva to inspect privately the new Sea Canal, just completed. The vast quays and warehouses were, naturally, for the most part, empty, but the work was done. Sea-going vessels drawing 23 feet could now steam right through to the Neva, and discharge their cargoes at the custom house quay, at the top of the Vasili Island, whereas I had known vessels drawing only 9 feet stopped on the river bar.¹ I noticed marsh-marigolds and white anemones in profusion everywhere; violets and wood-sorrel in places. Two days later lady-smocks were out and nightingales singing. On the 27th I attended the formal opening of the Canal, to which St. Petersburg owes so much of its after prosperity.

On June the 10th Gladstone resigned, and Mr. Stead commented dolefully on the vanity of human expectation as follows :

“ The Gladstone Government of 1880 when it quitted office in 1885 had done nothing for Macedonia, had done nothing for Armenia, and had brought Russia and England to the verge of war over a frontier question in Central Asia.”²

In July I went to Harraka, convoying this time Lady Thornton, her two daughters, “ Eddie,” and the Grosvenors, she a charming and beautiful American, daughter of the famous missionary, Dr. Wells Williams, author of *The Middle Kingdom*.³ We had an unusually long and troublesome journey, failing to find vehicles for the twenty kilometres drive from the railway to Willmanstrand,

¹ One such—a R.Y.S. schooner—passed safely over on payment of a considerable bribe to the port-officer; so that the depth of water depended to some extent on the amount of roubles in one's pocket. There was great excitement on the quays and on the Nicholas bridge when the young ladies on board took their morning headers in the Neva, I took the party up to Harraka, but the water was abnormally low and we barely caught fish enough to eat.

² *M.P. for Russia*, vol. ii. p. 86.

³ Now Lady Gray, wife of Sir Albert Gray, K.C.B., K.C., etc.

where we were to catch a steamer across the Saima sea to our destination. I managed at last to get ponies and carts for the rest, and they were lucky enough to catch the boat. I missed it myself, and had to drive all the way to Harraka—a distance of sixty kilometres—in the course of which I was soaked to the skin by a rain-storm of tropical intensity. However, all this made arrival at our fishing paradise more delightful than ever, and I luxuriated in the dream of what was to come. Next morning I was just putting Mrs. Grosvenor off in a boat to fish the lower pool; the sun shone; the water, fresh from its confinement in the great lake above, danced merrily; an impudent five-pounder hurled himself straight up out of the stream in sheer joy of living; Central Asia with all its worries and alarms had clean left my mind—when down through the pines and birches came hurrying an ominous figure, the black servant we then had at the club, bearing in his hand a telegram. It was, of course, for me! I opened it and read: "*Your telegrams completely out of it. Russian attempt on Meruchak chief topic. Mudford.*"¹ It *must* be nonsense, of course. I had seen Sir Edward and others the day before. I had vigilant friends on guard. But there was only one thing to be done. Ordering a post-cart I said good-bye to my companions, drove the 70 kilometres to Viborg, caught the train there, and went straight from it to the Embassy, where the Ambassador assured me sympathetically that the news was the merest *canard*. I then wrote my mind to my editor, spent the evening with the Tafts and Lothrop, who had just arrived, and next day went all the way back to the Club at Harraka and fished! Counting the return journey the distance driven amounted to some two hundred and twenty kilometres that week, all in jerky little two-wheeled gigs (*tarataikas*); and I spent eighteen hours in stuffy trains. But Harraka was worth it!

¹ Meruchak is some twenty miles from 'Penjdeh,' up the Murghab, and is now an Afghan frontier fort.

I referred some time back ¹ to "a very delicate matter" upon which Sir Edward Thornton had consulted me. It was this. The Grand-duke Serge, fourth son of Alexander II. and brother of Alexander III., had become a suitor for the hand of the Princess Elizabeth of Hesse, sister of the Empress Alexandra. The Grand-duke's reputation had long been assailed by rumours of such a nature as, if true, would make his marriage with any woman, but above all with one so young, innocent and beautiful, hardly tolerable. The scandal had reached the ears of Queen Victoria, who, deeply concerned for the happiness of her beloved grand-daughter, wrote privately to her Ambassador in St. Petersburg expressing anxiety and telling him to make enquiries. Sir Edward sent for me and begged me, in strictest confidence, of course, to aid him. After questioning Schouvaloff and others, I told him—as indeed he knew already—that the accusations were openly made in all classes of Russian society and commonly believed. On the other hand, proof in such cases was seldom possible; there was, as he also knew, no more scandal-loving society in the world than that in which we lived and moved, and, personally, I would not take the responsibility of adding one straw's weight to the adverse side of the balance in Her Majesty's mind. What his report was I do not know, but the marriage took place not long afterwards, in June, 1884. Now, in 1885, before leaving Russia for Constantinople, Sir Edward with Lady Thornton and, I think, their two daughters, paid a visit to the Grand-duke and his wife at their residence near Moscow, and on his return he told me that his mind had been greatly relieved by all he had seen and heard. "We were treated with most friendly and intimate hospitality. We had full opportunity to judge the relative positions of the young people, and both my wife and I are absolutely convinced that the bond between them is one of deep and genuine affection." I think he

¹ Page 190.

added that he had written to the Queen to that effect, but of this I am not sure. Soon afterwards I told Schouvaloff what I had heard, when he at once confirmed it, saying that he also had paid a visit to Serge and his wife the last time he had been in Moscow, and had come away satisfied beyond doubt that they were as happy a couple as one could wish to see. "In fact, they are like a pair of—what do you call them in English—*tourterelles*?" "Turtle-doves." "Yes, that's it—a pair of turtle-doves." I recount this only because a scandal is often long-lived and I would willingly do anything in my power to dissipate any breath that might dim in the faintest degree the life-history of one who, if ever woman did, deserves the crown and palm of saint and martyr.

On the 3rd September, Sir Edward Thornton presented his letters of recall before proceeding to his new post, Constantinople, and the Emperor took the occasion to express his satisfaction at the anticipated amicable settlement of the Afghan difficulty. He regretted the feeling that had been excited on both sides, and—rightly—attributed it to the Press.

On the 9th September the Russian Government received information from London of the formal acceptance by the British Cabinet of its proposals in regard to the Zulficar Pass, the vital part of which, as I had foretold, was left to Afghanistan—the one and only concession made to England. The last serious difficulty in the way of an amicable settlement of the Afghan question was thus overcome; the results arrived at were embodied in a Protocol, and the actual delimitation in detail was left for a mixed commission to establish on the spot. It was not, however, until July 1887 that the frontier was finally settled and done with.¹

It is humiliating to reflect upon the amount of ill-feeling engendered, and the terrible dangers run, before we consented to an extension of Russia's dominions in

¹ See p. 301.

Central Asia that is now accepted on all sides as having been not only natural but inevitable.

Meantime, I had received notice in May from Mudford that I was to be transferred to Berlin at the end of July. In June, however, when Lord Salisbury took office, this arrangement was cancelled—a significant enough comment on Conservative foreign policy—and I accepted a new agreement for three years in St. Petersburg. I took rooms in the Chertkóff house in the Moshkoff-pereúlok, just off the Palace Quay, where I had for neighbours my friends Colonel Ivor Herbert¹ and Law, who lived together. After a while I reluctantly exchanged my first floor apartment for theirs, two floors higher, Herbert explaining that the gouty old generals it was his duty to entertain found the stairs too much for them. A frequent visitor at that time was von Plessen, a jovial German Naval Attaché, a personal favourite of the Emperor William. It was said that he and Herbert were indiscreetly interested in the submarine defences of Kronstadt, and incurred the displeasure of the Emperor, who, in a fury, declared that he would tolerate no more Naval or Military Attachés. De Giers mildly remonstrated, pointing out that this would involve recalling all the Russian attachés abroad. "And why not?" said his Majesty, still fuming, "*imbéciles qu'ils sont, they* never send us anything worth having!" He allowed himself to be mollified, however, and the absurd system by which "officers and gentlemen" were avowedly set to discover the military and naval secrets of the countries they were accredited to continued as before.

Von Plessen was at that time a man one could hardly help liking. He was so frank, so genial. One of his sayings I always remember for the dose of brutal truth it contains. He was, sailor-like—in those days—too fond of imbibing. I remonstrated with him once, when he remarked: "My dear fellow, until you have seen a

¹ Now Lord Treowen.

man drunk you never quite know if he's a gentleman or not ! ”

I spent some time in the month of August in Finland accompanying the Emperor and Empress from place to place and recording their doings. My letters to the *Standard* go some way, I think, towards giving a tolerably correct picture of the Finland of those days, a country of many attractions. They were in part reproduced in my brother's pleasant little book, *Chay and Chianti*.

The Emperor soon after (22nd August) left for Kremsier, to meet the Emperor of Austria.



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CHAPTER XI

Bird-nesting at Wellington College—A sense of gravity—A mighty tree—A rare egg—Lígovo and Litánia—The Russian Spring—Birds and flowers—An obese burglar—A belated brood—Birds that brave the winter—Greediness punished—Ideal woodmen—Night in the forest—The head-keeper—Treachery frustrated—Capercaillie stalking—Peril of passion—An angry bear—The wakeful cuckoo—Black-cock shooting—Feathered Don Juans—"Berryless bog"—The woods at midnight—Matti the Finn—The hill-tarn—Will it sink?—How not to shoot wild-duck—Bog and marsh—Doubles—Californian fruit—Marsh birds—Wolves by moonlight—"Cock-roads"—Land and water—Perilous paddling—An ultimate term of reproach.

See map, p. 254.

EACH year as spring came round I indulged to some extent a taste for birdnesting developed at Wellington College in the days when Charles Kingsley took a personal interest in our Natural History Society and lectured at our meetings.

Of one expedition in particular, a jumble of success and failure, I retain vivid memories. My main objective was an osprey's nest high up on the gnarled and spreading branch of a pine-tree, in the forest between Vártemiaki and Lémbolovo, overhanging a tiny tributary of the Okhta. I had been taken to the spot by one of the keepers a few days previously only to find that the tree was too big to swarm, too bare to climb. This time I came provided with two coils of rope, a block, and a salmon-reel and line, with bullet attached. Accompanied by the keeper, a rosy-cheeked young giant, and his

brother, a well-grown lad of fifteen, I made my way to the spot soon after dawn without any misgiving save as to what might be the contents of the nest—eggs, chicks or mere stark emptiness—and started operations.

A neighbouring spruce, tall and of many branches, enabled me to throw the bullet over the lowest limb of the pine, that on which, some 15 or 20 feet out, the vast structure of the nest was spread. Coming down I overhauled the line, and soon had the pulley fixed in place beneath the bough by one rope, with the other rove through it. At one end of the latter I made a bight, took my stand in it, gave the word to hoist away, and with the help of my own two hands was soon in a position to seize and straddle the bough. But now came one of the most humiliating moments of my life. I had no sooner caught sight of the little river at what seemed a vast distance below me than my head swam and my knees quaked.

I made desperate efforts to control my nerves, but speedily realised that to climb out to the nest was more than I could manage. I should inevitably fall and, indeed, it was with difficulty that I regained my position in the bight of the rope and with the help of my companions reached ground again in safety. Deeply mortified I explained matters as best I could, whereupon the keeper remarked with kindly consideration: "*Nichevó, Iván Ivánovich, eto chasto buiváyet* (that often happens); but just you pull *me* up and I'll soon get the eggs for you if there are any." So the boy and I hoisted away, when lo! before we had him three-fourths of the way up he began shouting to us to let him down again! It was a pale-faced young giant who explained "*u menyá takje golová krújitsa*" (my head, too, turns round). In short, if the adventure was not for me, neither was it for him.

I was greatly disappointed, for it seemed that the precious eggs, which, of a surety, the nest contained, were

beyond our reach ; yet the salve to my wounded vanity was soothing. I had done no worse than this son of the forest ; indeed my performance distinctly outclassed his, for had I not actually straddled the bough ? Moreover, the frequent sight of house-painters at work on fragile stages let down from parapets 50 or more feet above ground—bits of board so nailed together that to all appearance the least kick would scatter them—and of *dvorniks* clearing snow from vertiginous roofs, had compelled a belief that in the average Russian no real sense of (the force of) gravity existed, whereas my own possession of that quality had never been in doubt !

These reflections had barely comforted my heart when the boy in turn volunteered to try his luck, and to this, after some hesitation—his brother urging it—I agreed. We soon had him up to the branch ; a moment more and he was on it : yet another and without the slightest hesitation he had scrambled out to the nest, to find it, alas, quite empty ! The birds, no doubt, had either been shot or shot at and frightened away, for they had been busy at the nest some days earlier. Before lowering the boy, I took with him by fishing line the exact height from first branch to ground, which, measured by the tape, I found to be 74 feet. As the river ran deep under an overhanging bank at this spot, the distance from nest to water was still greater. The girth of the tree was rather more than 9 feet at 5 from the ground, whence the stem rose straight and bare as a marble column. Such trees are rare in the forests of Northern Russia, which are cut for timber at less than one third the age of this patriarch ; but, as frequently happens, on the last two occasions, at least, when this particular section, now full-grown again, was felled, trees had been left standing here and there for seeding, and this was one of them.

The expedition, so far, was a failure, but the day had hardly begun, and, on my way back to St. Petersburg across country, I took eggs—amongst others—of the

ural owl, the wood-sandpiper, and, better far, one egg of the rare lesser-spotted-eagle. This nest was near the top of a tall and very dense spruce, full of the spikiest of branches. I brought down the egg in safety—I have it still—but at the expense of my trousers of which a notable fragment remained fluttering in the tree. Luckily I had by me an overcoat wherewith to conceal my loss!

At Lígovo, some dozen miles from the centre of St. Petersburg, on the road to Peterhof and Oranienbaum, was another small colony of the well-to-do English, a rival to Mourino. The great Empress Catherine, it seems, disliking the dull monotony of the coast-road, caused the land through which it runs to be cut up into transverse strips, and distributed amongst her courtiers with command to build houses, and lay out parks and gardens, on them. Several of these houses were still standing in my time, and in one of them, known as *Litânia*, lived E. H. Ebsworth, as genial a man as ever lived—outside his office—local chief of the great industrial firm¹ from which Millers, Cazalets and others drew millions in the second half of the nineteenth century. Here, in summer, he and his clever wife, dispensed lavish hospitality to their many friends, and to strangers who were lucky enough to bring introductions to them, while near by dwelt others of the British community hardly less hospitable. There were tennis-lawns in plenty, gardens, pine-woods, ornamental water, and, across the high-road, meadow, marsh and sea—or rather the rush-bordered fresh-water gulf at either end of which lay St. Petersburg and Kronstadt.

Birds were protected at *Litânia* and, as their charming habit is, they repaid their human friends by an adorable confidence in breeding-time. There is no spring, in our sense of the word, in northern Russia; one week, say the second or third in May, all the trees are bare, snow still

¹ " Sir William Miller & Co."

lurks in shady places, from the feathered tribes are heard only fitful pipings, and no flowers blow. A fortnight later summer is in full bloom or nearly so, every leaf and flower, every bird and beast striving riotously to make up for a late beginning by exerting themselves to the utmost in the main business of their lives, growth and reproduction, with all that this implies. So that while the deciduous trees and shrubs, garden bushes and waste-land brakes hastily don their fullest verdure, one flower after another opens out in a succession so rapid as to be quite bewildering, tall grasses spring and, in short, weeds, good and ill, grow up apace. Meantime nests seem to get built in a day, and you have hardly had a chance to find them—when lo! they have eggs, a little later callow broods, then full-fledged young, and final emptiness!

The luxuriant growth and vast abundance of the wild flowers strikes even the least observant of western visitors with amazement; and in so far as regards numbers, it is much the same with the birds. Of most species it may be said that they are there in profusion or not at all. Thus, in the *Litdnia* garden, in the course of a dewy morning or two, A——, our best hand at such things, found no fewer than seven nightingales' nests, all with eggs in them. The chorus that used to rise in the never-dark nights may be imagined, with the anthems of song-thrush and missel-thrush, blackbird and black-cap, and many another, to open and close it, morning and evening, though it must be admitted that the nightingales in Northern Russia never, to my ear at least, attained the richness and variety, or "full-throated ease" of our own. The less wonder, then, if more than one light sleeper of my acquaintance ended by anathematising the wakeful bird as heartily as the proverbial huntsman "them stinking violets." But a far worse plague, when a field of rye or barley grew close to the house you slept in, was the corn-crake, whose harsh monotonous *k-r-e-k, k-r-e-k,*

endlessly repeated, might well drive a man crazy. However, there were better things. From a bedroom window in the Red Dacha, one of the houses on the same property, I have watched the golden orioles building their hanging nests beneath the horizontal branch of an aspen not 20 yards away, and, by the way, the oriole's fluty call-note is so easy to imitate that one year I succeeded in making even A—— announce prematurely the arrival of this welcome spring visitor. In a wall of the same house robins, comparatively rare birds in those parts, built one summer in a hole meant to receive, nightly, the shutter-bar of a ground-floor window, with the result that, rather than destroy the nest, my friends the owners and their guests ran the risk of burglary, or worse, till the brood had flown. But that a *Litânia* burglar might, possibly, strike no tragic note was proved some years later when L. C., an embassy secretary, woke one night to see an obese individual in the act of waddling out through his bedroom door. He gave chase in scant attire, and having overtaken and captured the stranger proceeded with the aid of Mikhail, the butler, to divest him successively—as one peels an onion—of no less than three good English suits of clothes—dress, day, and flannels—before the villain stood revealed, a lanky degenerate, in his own red-cotton shirt and shoddy trousers.

In August, already, birds from the farther North began passing in their thousands, for the most part invisibly, though certain wild-fowl and the double-snipe made happy exceptions. Then, with the first autumn frosts, they, and the summer residents with them, flew southwards; but one year, on my balcony at Lígovo, a pair of swallows had the imprudence to hatch out a second or perhaps a third brood in mid-September! The frosts came; all the rest of the tribe had long been preparing for flight, and many of them had seemed not a little disturbed by the domestic affairs of my rash little friends. This culminated one day in a remarkable scene. For

some hours swallows came singly, in pairs, in dozens of pairs, flying into my balcony, fluttering up to the nest where the helpless young ones gaped at them, and away again, shrieking and twittering all the time, and saying most plainly: "*We told you so! we told you so! the frost has come, we must all fly south, there's not a day to be lost. We can't wait any longer. Poor little things, you'll be frozen to death or lost on the way, flying all alone. Oh dear, oh dear, we told you so!*" This went on till sunset. Next day there was not a swallow left save only the unfortunates on my balcony. However, the next few days were mild, the brave parents fed their young assiduously, and watched and cared for them till their wings grew strong. Then they, too, all disappeared, and I tried to believe that they reached Persia, at least, or perhaps Egypt in safety.

Red-backed shrikes were common, and their gruesome larders might be seen not infrequently in the high black-thorn hedges. Many others of our garden birds frequented the place, sweetly familiar; and sometimes from the neighbouring pine-woods, to remind us that England, after all, it was not, came the harsh, weird laughter of the great black, red-headed woodpecker. But to enumerate all the birds I saw and noted in Russia would be tedious. I will only add therefore the names of some that were more especially noticeable by reason of their strangeness, their beauty, or the circumstances attending their occurrence. In the North we had of birds that turn white, or whiter, in winter—the snowy owl, the Greenland falcon—both rarely—the willow-grouse, hardly to be distinguished, at that season, from the ptarmigan, and the snow-bunting, flocks of which appear "along the roads" (as their Russian name *podorójniki* implies) after the New Year, to be slaughtered in numbers for the table. The Russian bull-finches exceed our own in size and depth of colouring, and it was a delight in the far forests of Olónets to see them gather round our blazing log-fires,

their beauty enhanced by contrast of rosy, puffed-out breasts with the surrounding snow. Cross-bills, pine-grosbeaks and wax-wings, the great-tit and blue-tit, the nuthatch and even the delicate tree-creeper likewise defy the rigours of the northern winter, or, at most, in seasons of exceptional severity, make their way as far south as the wooded parts of Little Russia. It will be seen, therefore, that the non-migratory birds of the North are chiefly :—such as find their sustenance, whether animal or vegetable, on the trees ; birds such as the capercailzie, black-game, partridges and willow-grouse, big and strong enough to get at their food—berries and shoots—under the snow ; and those birds of prey, whose quarry likewise remains in the North. In short, migration depends not on the degree of heat or cold, but on the possibility of obtaining a sufficiency of the right kind of food. Even in the cases above mentioned of winter-residents driven south by severe weather it is, probably, not the cold itself but the effect of the cold in sealing up the stores of provender—in the crevices of the bark, beneath the snow, or elsewhere—that determines their flight.

The hooded-crows alighted in the streets of the capital with just the action of the little Dutch (or Flemish) angels in one of Rembrandt's pictures in the Hermitage, wherein a very homely Virgin watches her precious babe asleep in a wicker cradle. Magpies and jays were very common, especially the former. They were seldom innumerable enough to foretell less than twins ! The Siberian jay, a dull-plumaged bird, I saw only in Finland. Game-birds are, or were, extremely numerous and of most delicious flavour, whether plain-roast, *en casserole*, or stewed with *smetána*, the soured cream which is the soul of Russian cookery. If there is a better-eating bird than the double-snipe I have yet to taste it ; while hazel-grouse (*gelinotte*, *ryábchik*), young black-game and quite young capercailzie, to mention no more, are hard to beat.

The birds of prey throughout Russia are common, in great variety, and many of them highly interesting. An imperial eagle, the stuffed skin of which long adorned my dining-room, fell a victim to his own gluttony. My friend E. D. had shot an elk at Ostramánsha one winter, and a fortnight later I happened to take my stand at the same spot on a similar errand. Presently I became aware of something moving on the snow in front of me, but screened by small fir-trees. The elk, if any were there, would not be out for some time as the drive was a long one, so I made my way forward, plunging through deep wet snow, and saw to my surprise an eagle flapping his wings in an attempt to rise, while from his beak streamed entrails of elk which he vainly endeavoured to disgorge. After a somewhat arduous chase, for I was heavily clothed, I succeeded in knocking the bird on the head, and in death my victim was unselfish enough to facilitate removal by clasping one foot round the other so tightly that an hour afterwards I could with difficulty disengage them. As it was, I put my gun between the eagle's legs and carried him at ease over my shoulder. In the southern steppes the great-bustard (*drofá*) was the noblest bird, the little-bustard (*strepotá*) the hardest to get, though in late autumn exceedingly numerous, some flocks numbering thousands. In the Caucasus the great *megaloperdix*, haunting the snow-line; the rose-coloured pastor, locust fed on Caspian shores; the roller, loud-voiced and impudent; the bee-eater, of which little flocks would flutter curiously round my head as I rode over some of the lower (transverse) passes, uttering quaint short notes; and the dainty hoopoe—all these and more were my delight and are so still, though now, alas, in memory only.

I could never sufficiently admire the handiness and self-sufficing ways of the northern peasant, whether Russian or Finn. In his *tulúp* (wide-skirted coat of sheep-skin

with the wool inside) felt boots (*válenki*), an axe in his belt, matches in his pocket and a hunch of bread somewhere about him, he would set off unconcernedly in any weather, with the chance of spending one or more nights in the woods. Choosing a dead, dried-up tree, such as never fail in the unkept forest, he would soon have it down, when wanted, and chopped into logs several feet long. These he would dispose in such a way—lengthwise, one above two—that a fire once started, which with birch-bark or other kindling ever at hand presented no difficulty, would burn a long night through. There is little or no wind in the woods, but if the frost be intense the faintest draught is keenly felt; in that case a perfect screen can be built of snow, and, indeed, the heat of the fire soon causes the logs to sink, so that, automatically, a shelter is formed, which, if desired, can be made yet more perfect by a partial roofing of branches. I have vivid and most pleasant recollections of nights thus passed or, more often, of an hour or so before and after midnight, the silent time between the evening and the morning *toks*,¹ a time so fascinating that I seldom slept, but talked instead with the keeper, drawing from him what I could of his forest-lore, his knowledge of bird and of beast, and the details of his own existence and surroundings. Or, if one did nod off it was slumber not sleep that came, of that precious quality which preserves a vague continuity with the conscious state immediately preceding it, and on such an occasion as this can steep one's very soul in bliss.

My first venture after capercailzie remains vividly impressed on my mind not only because everything then was new, but because, by chance, it included elements more dramatic than did any subsequent outing of the kind. It was Schouvaloff, of course, who gave me this earliest opportunity to stalk and kill the giant "cock of the woods"; it would have hurt him to know that

¹ See *ante*, p. 91 note.

some one else had done so ! We drove down to Vártemiaki in time to dine at the Lodge, in a room walled round with glass-cases full of the smaller four-footed beasts, from the wolf downwards, and of birds up to wild-geese and swans, the latest addition being a red-throated diver. A great brown bear, a wooden tray in its fore-paws, stood as dumb-waiter in one corner ; an elk's head hung over one door ; a capercailzie blind and deaf—head upturned, neck bent, wings drooping, tail outspread—seemed in act to utter his quaint love-note above another. With coffee, in came Andréi, head-keeper—a keen, but unprepossessing individual, of forty years or more, with ferrety eyes, lank yellow hair and beard, and jagged teeth, too often displayed. He was probably a cross between Russian and Finn. As already related, he was devoted, not altogether unselfishly we may fairly suppose, to Pável Pávlovich, the son of his master, Count Paul, yet full of cringing servility—one could not blame him, it could hardly be otherwise—to my friend who leased the shooting and paid all the wages. Andréi now made his report with much bowing and scraping. The count knew every hole and corner of the estate, and had known them before Andréi was born, so that it was useless to try any tricks at this stage. We learnt which of the *toks* were most frequented that year, and my friend, as a matter of course—he was incapable by nature of acting otherwise—assigned the best to me. We started presently, on pony-back, but having reached a point in the forest where three or more paths diverged we dismounted and proceeded separately on foot, avoiding, as the superstition is, any mutual wish for good-luck. I had gone but a little way when the count's voice was heard in high and peremptory tones : “ Andréi ! Andréi ! *Kudá-je* ? (Where to ? ”) We retraced our steps to find my friend nearly speechless with rage ; Andréi, by now, being white with fear. It appeared that something in the man's voice or manner had roused my friend's suspicions ; he had,

therefore, after going a short way only, stepped behind a tree, turned, and caught Andréi in the act of leading me towards a very different *tok* to the one agreed upon, his object being to keep the best for Pável Pávlovich, probably by agreement with him. Count Peter said no more than was necessary now ; the scene I have referred to ¹ took place next morning at the lodge ; but he sent the culprit home with the ponies ; took, as his own attendant, the man who had the care of them ; and gave me in charge to the second-keeper. There was no fear of my being led astray again that night !

After a while we left the beaten track and made our way amongst tall pines and spruces, the ground in many places being white with snow, firm but not crusted, an inch of it representing a foot or more of what had fallen from time to time during the winter months. It was now dark under the trees, the birds that had been singing lustily when first we came out ceased one by one, till only the cuckoo was still to be heard, and even he became silent at last. Presently, the keeper stopped, handed me my gun and put his hand to his ear ; then nodded and pointed in a certain direction. He listened again and said *Slishno ?* (Do you hear ?) But I heard nothing unless it were the beating of my heart. A moment later he took firmly hold of my left arm and whispering *Prýgai* (jump) we jumped together making three long strides. Then, a pause, and the process was repeated, save only that this time at the second jump I sank knee-deep in spongy soil and no third stride was possible. Now, this is of the very essence of capercailzie stalking. His song begins with a short, sharp "tuck" ; if he is in form, and quite unafraid, this sound is repeated after a few seconds ; then again and again, at diminishing intervals, each "tuck" becoming "tucka," till the song is one continuous ripple of sound ending with a sort of frantic, prolonged *chuwish-sh-sh* ! Whilst delivering himself of

¹P. 91.

this last note the bird—posed as above described—is in ecstasy, his eyes and ears hermetically sealed ; and no noise or sight, not even the flash and roar of a gun fired just below him, has the slightest effect on a creature at other times as alert as any in all the woodland, whether on two legs or on four. It is during the uttering of the *chuwish-sh-sh*, and then only, that any movement can be made by the stalker, with impunity. Sometimes only one jump, more often two, seldom more than three can be made, and, as stated, where your last jump ends, however awkward, even painful, your posture may be—thigh deep, perhaps, in a patch of bog, snow or water ; face downwards in a prickly bush—that posture you must keep and hold, making not the slightest noise or movement ; for the great bird, as if aware of the peril his passion may bring him, becomes immediately after the conclusion of his song more wary than ever, and it takes but the merest suspicion of human presence to make him fly off with a noise of thunder, or cease singing for a time or, as far as you and that night are concerned, altogether. If there is no alarm, the “ tuck ” “ tuck ” will soon begin again, and song follow song with hardly a pause between. The approach is then easy and the stalker is soon up to the tree near the top of which the bird sits ; but then comes, often enough, a new difficulty, for it is hard at times to make out which of many ink-black patches against the nearly black sky is the bird. Beginners, and, even, on occasion, old hands, may make a mistake and fire at a branch. In such case if you have waited duly for the *chuwish-sh-sh* no harm is done ; the bird hears nothing, sees nothing, and you will hardly make the same mistake twice running. If, however, the shot was fired at any other moment, you will have had your trouble for nothing—away goes the bird and if a capercailzie is bagged that night, you may be sure it is not that one !

One most annoying trick the capercailzie has, for,

occasionally—as E. D. reminds me—for some reason unknown he will sing while running about on the ground, with the result that the bewildered sportsman, puzzled as to whether there may not be two or more birds singing, turns now to the right, now to the left, and, finally, as likely as not, flushes his prey from the ground while searching for him in the tree-tops. The flying-shot that follows, through the trees, in the dark, is hardly worth chancing.

But my own first venture had a different ending. It was not until we had made our jumps three times that I myself began to hear the first notes of the song, to which an unaccustomed ear “catches on” with no small difficulty. Then a rather long pause occurred. The fourth time the keeper let me go on alone; there was a still longer pause, and when I jumped again I ended upon one knee in a patch of snow. The next noise I heard was something very different to the love-song of capercailzie or any other amorist; for it was a most distinct cracking and smashing of branches.

I was new to the Russian forest by night; indeed, it was my first experience in it, but I had enough knowledge to be sure that unless my keeper had gone crazy and was breaking branches in a rage, which was exceedingly unlikely, the sound I heard could only be made by a bear. I kept very still, though near freezing, for I had no fur-jacket on, and again heard the noise, but this time it was rather a scratching and rending than a breaking noise, and somewhat further off. A little longer and I rose to my feet; I was cold and stiff, the tips of my ears were frozen, one foot freezing, and I could bear it no more. The bird, too, was silent. The keeper now came up, and the first thing he said was, excitedly: “A bear, Iván Ivánovich, a bear! Did you hear it?” We waited a bit, and then as all was still went in the direction whence the sounds had come. I had already loaded with bullets, but there was little hope that the beast would give me a

chance of shooting. We came presently on his tracks in the snow, and the keeper pointed out where a big pine had been flayed of its bark to a height of several feet from the ground upwards. "The bear heard you jumping and was angry. See, Iván Ivánovich, how he has barked the tree!"

The excitement had more than made up for getting no capercailzie in the evening *tok*, which was now over. We took our way to where a shelter had been made and a fire lit, and for two hours or so I talked to my companion of bears and their ways, and of other things, or drowsed, waiting for the dawn. The cuckoo, last to salute the woods was the first to wake them again.¹ We then moved back to the *tok*; I successfully stalked and shot my first capercailzie, and walked home to the lodge after sunrise, with nothing of a bag, truly, but more than satisfied with my varied experience—Andréi's treachery, my own toil and suffering (for I was rather sharply frost-bitten), the spice of danger, the novelty of the sport, the songs and calls of birds of many kinds, resumed, in some cases, at least after dawn in inverse order to that of their leaving off after sundown—in short, all the fascination and glamour of sport in the northern forest by night and in spring-time.

Shooting black-game in spring was much less exciting than stalking capercailzie, but, in its way, quite as interesting. The method was to put up a *shaláshka* (wigwam) of boughs at the *tok* and ensconce oneself in it overnight, with or without a companion. Further to attract the birds, one or two decoys of wood, papier-maché, or stuffed skins would be fixed upon stripped pine or spruce stems, 12-20 feet high, at the edge of the *tok*. Towards dawn, with startling suddenness, the male

¹ Of one such occasion (8/20th May, 1888) I find in my diary that, save for the noise of wild-duck passing overhead, there was silence in the woods from midnight for one hour only—the cuckoo beginning his call again at 12.57 a.m. precisely. But the middle of May is a very late date for *glukhár* (capercailzie) stalking.

birds, who had been gathering silently in the trees near by, would come to the ground with a weird swishing of many wings, challenge each other noisily, and, after much preliminary sparring, engage in desperate, or seemingly desperate, combats, while the grey-hens looked on demurely from the neighbouring covert, ready to extend their favours to the victors in the fight, as the way is of the sex throughout the realm of Nature. Some writers deride the black-cock as a sham hero who only pretends to deal deadly blows at his rival ; but I think the accusation unjust, and, in any case, feathers fly, there is such strutting and posturing, so lively a jumping and pecking and ruffling, so vain-glorious a spreading and drooping of wings and of tail, and such a tail—in fine, so gallant and amusing a show that small wonder should it win the approval of the human onlooker no less than of the lurking hen-birds.

At a good *tok* many couples battle at one and the same time, and it is then that the Russian sportsman thrusts his gun-barrels through the boughs of the *shaldshka*, and slaughters, one after the other, the fighting birds, to the number, it may be, of a dozen or more ; for their excitement is so great that the noise and flash of the gun frightens them, if at all, for a moment only. I confess to having killed a bird or two in this fashion now and then, but with some compunction, and for the most part I was more than content just to sit and watch the show. E. D. would leave his gun at home and pick off the more distant birds with a rook-rifle.

He reminds me that cock 'capers' have the immoral habit of forsaking their legitimate spouses in favour of the grey-hens and swaggering into the black-cock *toks*. One such intruder he picked off with his small-bore, and still has, stuffed, to remind him of happy days, or nights, gone by. By way of revenge, perhaps, or out of sheer wantonness the lady 'capers,' too, come creeping round and console the black-cocks on the sly. The results of

this depravity are hybrids, of which I have seen many specimens, clearly betraying their irregular origin.

We also shot black-game, as well as capercailzie, willow-grouse and partridges, over dogs, in the orthodox manner; and black-game, capercailzie, woodcock and *ryábchik*, when in luck, at our woodland drives in autumn. It was then that good shooting told, for the birds flew fast and high, and, often enough, the glade or clearing we stood in was too narrow to allow of even momentary hesitation, far less of second thoughts—or second shots.

Posting one night to Vártemiaki I had changed horses at Párgolovo, the intermediate station; we had just turned off from the Viborg road, a distance of little more than a mile, every yard of which had been enlivened by the jangling of the bells tied under the arched *dugá*, and the alternate objurgations and endearments addressed by the *yemshchík* to his horses in a bunch or individually, including such choice epithets as *golúbchik* (little pigeon), *mazúrik* (scoundrel), *razboiniki* (robbers), culminating in *kholéra* (cholera—an echo of the great epidemic of 1831), when the off galloper (*pristiájka*) stumbled in a snow-drift and the *yemshchík*, driven to an extreme, ejaculated *Akh ti, bezyágodnoye bolóto!* (oh, thou, berryless bog!). His voice from the beginning had sounded vaguely familiar; now I knew why, and I cried out: "Ah, my old friend, how goes it?" He turned half round, but it was too dark to make me out. "Eh *bárin*, you know me?" "Rather! were you not once on the Archangel road—let me see, five or six years ago?" "Why, yes, and I wish I were there still; I was better off there." He entered into a long explanation of why this was so, interlarded with abuse or encouragement addressed to his horses, and we kept up a broken conversation the rest of the way. At the end of the journey I gave him an extra good tip, for which he thanked me exuberantly; but the reader will be asking, "Why berryless bog?"

and that is just what, in a round-about way, I hope to explain.

In describing my first *troika* drive¹ I mentioned the Deviátkina bogs. The name was properly that of a very small village at the edge of the wood two miles north of Mourino; but we applied it also to the stretch of moor and marshland beyond, up to the first hills, through which the road to Toksovo and on to Ostramánsha wound. The wood has long been cut down, and a considerable population transplanted to Deviátkina from other villages which had to be demolished as the range of artillery increased, they being in the line of fire from the polygon, or base, at Okhta. But in the days I write of all this was yet to come. Schouváloff rented from the Departments of War and the Marine the shooting rights over all this stretch of country, whether open or wooded, and I, for ten years, had the full enjoyment of them. This was more especially the case with the late summer and autumn shooting, as my friend nearly always went abroad at that time of year, to Carlsbad or some such place, for health's sake, leaving me in sole possession.

I would then go to Mourino, claim the hospitality of one or other friend there, and, in return, take them out after "doubles" or other game. Sometimes I would start off at midnight, alone, gun on shoulder, cross the wooden bridge over the dark-flowing Okhta, and walk through the woods to the lonely cottage where dwelt one of Schouváloff's keepers, Matti by name, knock him up and trudge off over moor and marsh after wildfowl. This branch of sport had for me, as for so many other shooters, a wonderful fascination, and I was far too impressionable not to find a "fearful" pleasure in my lonely tramps through the darksome woods, where I knew that many a bright-eyed creature, from shrew-mice up to elk or bear, might be watching every movement of the strange invader of their solitude. I trod

¹ P. II.

silently, for the most part, on moss or pine-needles, so that it was sometimes startlingly close at hand that bird or beast—great or small—moved off with sudden swish or rustle, or even with bending and breaking of twigs and of branches.

Matti was a Finn, like most of the population from Deviátkina northwards, and, as usual in those parts, which had been detached from Finland since 1809, his Finnish had lost its purity while his Russian was indescribably comic, both in phrase and in accent. Still more so was the mixed jargon he addressed to his dogs, the terms used being such as he had picked up from Dietz and others who, as usual, above a certain class in Russia, spoke several languages. "*El-dorp!*" suggested an Arabic derivation, till I found that it was meant for "Hold-up!" But it was when a half-taught pointer dashed off in pursuit of a hare that Matti's vocabulary came to full fruition with "*Pérkalë-sátana* (a favourite Finnish reduplication of "devil")—come 'ere—e-se (French *ici*)—twee-fogel (German *pfui-vogel*, a warning against birds that were not game,") all this in one breath! The culminating attribution of wings to a hare was made, of course, quite unconsciously.

One night Matti and I walked off to a reedy tarn or mere, to the left of the road in the first folds of the Toksovo hills. He rowed me in a crazy boat to a small mud-flat near the centre, where he had put down a lidless packing-case with a plank across it for seat and rushes all round by way of screen. Here I was to wait for wild-duck which would infallibly come in great numbers at dawn. "I'll come back for you when you've done shooting. *I don't think it will sink,*" said Matti, and with that rather dubious commendation of all that stood between me and a mud-bath, or possibly a muddy grave, he pushed off and disappeared in the darkness. I waited patiently. The water in the box rose so slowly that with a sardine-tin for bailer, my fears in this respect

were soon relieved ; I had high, water-proof boots on, too, so that even wet feet were not in prospect, and hardly had the first faint streaks of dawn lightened the eastern sky when with a rush of welcome sound the first four or five wild-duck swept by overhead, then round the far side of the mere, made another and another circuit, each shorter than the last, volplaned downwards, and, next moment, with a multiple splashing followed by a brief chorus of contented "*quack-quacks*," settled on the water. The process was repeated again and again, single ducks, pairs, whole flights arriving in rapid succession until two hundred or more birds must have been assembled in the gradually brightening waters of the little hill-tarn.

I ought to have waited longer—on other occasions I did—but this first time I was unable to resist the temptation to fire into "the brown," as a belated party was just about to settle on the surface of the water. What followed I shall never forget. The whole two hundred rose at once, or all but two or three of them, with a noise that I will not attempt to describe, and, climbing rapidly, sailed off in steady flight for the more distant marshes, whence, that morning at least, not one of them returned. Matti soon came off in a boat, and we searched the water for my presumed victims ; but I had evidently killed nothing outright, and the reeds gave too good a shelter for wounded birds to allow us a chance of finding them, so that I set off homeward somewhat disconsolately. Luckily, crossing the marshes, I put up and killed a brace of teal and a golden-plover, and also brought down a solitary mallard flying high overhead. My reputation was saved both with Matti and my hostess at Mourino, whose larder I had undertaken to replenish.

At other times, when doubles were reported, I would start in the morning for Matti's hut with a friend or two, pick up him and his dogs and spend a long day in the open. The first mile or so was dry land, thick-grown with heather, but still more with low berry-bearing

plants such as bilberry, bearberry, cowberry and others.¹ Here, while not far from the woods, we might chance now and then on a covey of black-game; but for the most part would find only willow-grouse, less than half white at this time of year, and a brown hare or two. The dry belt ceased abruptly where the ground—in no place high—sank slightly down to become almost immediately marshland, rough with rank and coarse grass in spring, but in autumn a surface level and wet, with hay gathered sparsely in stacks, the size of those roped for carriage in Scotland. These were of no little use to hide our movements from the shyer birds. The soil here, or so I understood, was teaming with luscious food for snipe whether double, single or the diminutive jack, but especially with the larvae of our childhood's wonder, poor Daddy-longlegs. Something, in any case, there must have been to attract the birds, for in due season they would appear (the doubles, I mean) in considerable numbers and afford me and my friends no little pleasure, not so much indeed for the sport they gave, their flight being straight and low, but, that arriving lean and dry from their long journey, they soon fattened to such a degree that, falling to our shot on a hard patch of ground their breasts would actually burst open, and as I say elsewhere—it bears repetition—the double snipe is the most delicious bird to eat—on this side of the Atlantic, of course, for our American friends will never admit that anything we have in Europe can compare with their own produce, and that is why I am eternally grateful to a certain lady, wife of an Oregon senator—"sweet-heart" she called him—to whom, sitting on the Great Wall of China, munching persimmons for want of something better, I spoke, out of politeness, of the fruits of

¹ It is the cowberry, *Vaccinium vitis idaea*, not the cranberry, *Oxycoccus palustris*, that the Russians eat in the form of a preserve with game, especially with black-game and hazel-grouse (*rydbchik, gelinotte*). The cranberry is usually preferred as a sweetmeat, each berry whitened with powdered sugar.

California. "California!" cried she, "why, we go there every winter—but *we take our fruit with us!*"

Snipe were not plentiful in the Deviátkina marshes and bogs, but in summer and autumn never quite wanting. They rose abruptly and flew twisting and turning like their fellows farther west, in Great Britain and Ireland; moreover, they kept to the wetter portions of the marsh, and, having a way, so at least my experience taught me, of getting up by preference behind one's right shoulder just at the moment when left leg or right had found bottom at two feet or more beneath the surface, shooting them was a feat one might well be proud of—when it happened! Jack-snipe, also, were to be found each year in exiguous numbers. On the other hand, golden-plovers were fairly common, and gathered in autumn in flocks. The doubles were, with few exceptions, birds of passage, alighting only to feed, on their way south in autumn; but of the plovers, sandpipers of many kinds, ruffs and reeves, and others, also, mainly passers-by, not a few nested with us. In its lowest part the marsh was so wet that save in very dry autumns it was full of little streams and pools. On these one might find both teal and wild-duck, nor, thanks to the hay-stacks, were they difficult to approach. We were too far north for storks, but cranes bred annually in the vaster expanse of the marshes to eastward and would fly over, daily, with solemn "clonk, clonk," to feed on our ground. On the further side of the marsh (northwards) where the ground began to rise, and in August grass of Parnassus bloomed, curlew were not rare. I shot one as a specimen, but in general was only too glad to watch their flight and listen to their quaint whistling notes without molesting them. Over the first rise was the tarn already spoken of; beyond, the road wound through low hills with a good deal of brush-wood, and now and then timber, between, till passing a narrow isthmus, with the Toksovo lakes on either side, it rose steeply to where a large, plain red-brick church

with very tall steeple stood dominating the country for many miles round and calling the lutheran Finns from their far-scattered homesteads to prayer. In the lower hills Schouváloff and I, and his other friends, shot many a wolf and fox, to say nothing of lesser game, and once, it happened that a party of wolves having baffled our trackers by keeping continually on the prowl till nightfall, we were already in our *troikas* about to depart, when a keeper came gliding up and declared that he had ringed the quarry in a mere patch of birch-wood on the very edge of the western lake. It was too dark then to shoot, and doubt was thrown by some on the keeper's story; but by good luck the full moon would rise in an hour, the sky was clear, and Schouváloff, prince Iván Golítsin and I decided to try our luck. We took our places in absolute silence, waited till the moon was well up, drove the ring with trackers only, and bagged three wolves, I one of them—a fine big fellow—the prettiest shoot of the kind that I remember!

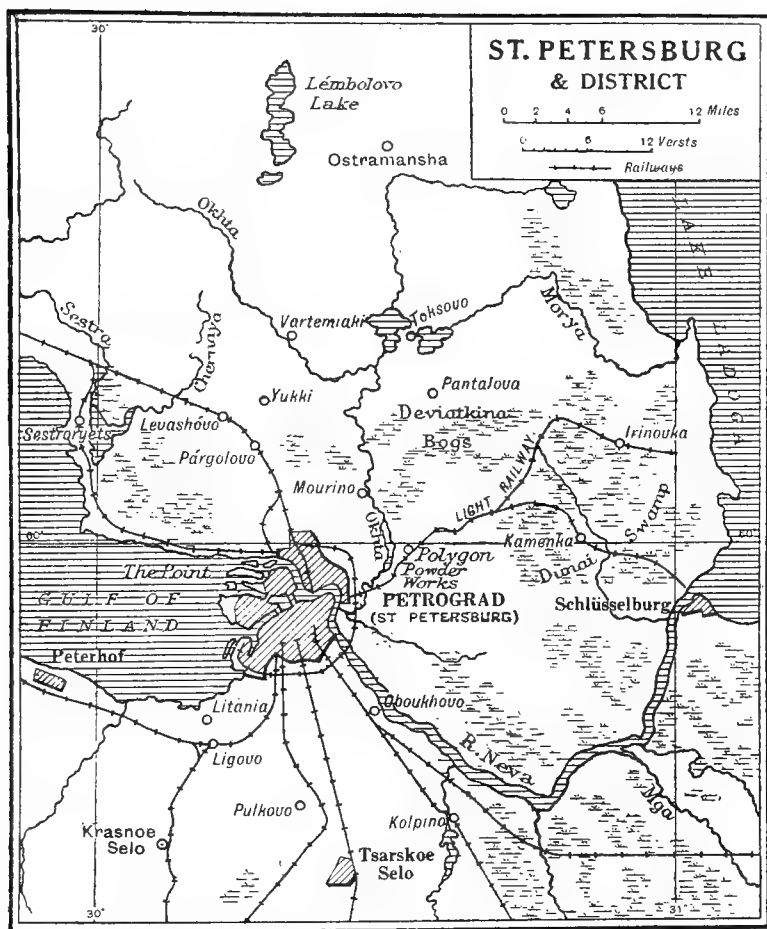
Woodcock are widely spread and fairly common in Northern Russia, where they are mostly shot in the late spring when making their strange "nuptial" flights—so-called—along the "cock-roads" by the red after-glow so usual in the North at that time of year. These, too, I shot at Toksovo—and elsewhere. In Vorónej I saw them in autumn in large numbers, but these were birds of passage on their way to the Caspian Sea and to Persia. In Finland one June day I flushed a woodcock from my very feet and had the luck to see, clearly, a young one being carried to safety between the parent-bird's legs.

To these Toksovo hills we sometimes came—I and my fellow-members of the Yukki *Ski*-ing Club with our guests—and accomplished what in those days, with toe-straps only, were no mean performances—so at least we thought, then, and so I think still. No *ski* had been seen in Switzerland up to that time, and, outside Scandinavia, we were the only amateurs in existence.

The Yukki Club, by the way, had from first to last, three rules, and three only, viz. : Rule No. 1 : *In this club there are no rules* ; to which we added after a time : Rule No. 172 (in regard chiefly to food and drink, which members took with them) : *Ask for nothing, help yourself* ; and, finally, Rule 365 : *Never go out alone*. This last was meant in all seriousness, for after an accident or two we realised the folly of risking death from the mere twisting of an ankle, to say nothing of severer injuries—yet that and not less must inevitably have resulted from inability to move or summon aid when away in the woods or at the bottom, say, of a wind-swept-hill, in hard frost, lightly clad as we always were and, in all probability, sweating freely.

I have mentioned more than once the Toksovo lakes. The low, western shore of the left-hand lake going north gave a striking example of how in these parts, through various stages, water becomes in the course of time dry land. For there all sorts of floating debris and weeds collect and get matted together. Then seeds are brought by the wind, or by birds, or the waters in flood ; marsh plants grow, their roots strike down, humus accumulates and the floating bank becomes thicker and denser. It is then what is called a floating bog, on which one may venture in peril of one's life on *ski*, but on nothing else. I did so once and again, after snipe and other birds, but realizing the folly of the proceeding, for the whole surface shook and death leered up at me from sudden crevices and slimy pools, I made no third adventure. In course of time, or all the time, the firm ground extends slowly, by accretion, into the lake, which, being nowhere deep save just under the steep east bank, will one day be reduced to little more than a pond. The same process, of course, must have been going on in countless places all over northern Russia, changing slowly the whole face of the country.

In Finland, once, starting from Hottaka lake in my



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Canadian canoe, we entered through a reedy channel what was marked on the only available map as a sheet of water a mile or more in width. We soon found ourselves in a marsh or bog of a peculiarly treacherous character, but forced our way onwards, thinking soon to reach open water. Before long, movement in any direction became all but impossible, the fact being, as we learnt afterwards, that the whole expanse had been undergoing conversion into dry land since the bursting of a dam some thirty years back, giving the Vuoksa a new and much shorter vent to Lake Ládoga. We were three strong men in the canoe, but it was only by the utmost exertion, rising and thrusting all together at word of command, "One, two, three—away!" and gaining not more than a foot at a time that we eventually won through to a stream that joined the Vuoksa. The consistency of the mud may be gauged by our efforts; yet nowhere would the surface have supported even a small child, while the depth was greater than our paddles could fathom. We spent three hours and more in that horrible place.

But what, after all, of our "berryless bog"? Well, the bogs in Russia—not the marshes, where of edible fruits only the cranberry grows, but the peaty bogs—grow berries in such astounding profusion that I can well imagine my *yemshchik* thinking that a bog without a berry must be beyond all comparison the most desolate and abominable place on earth—and rightly, therefore, the ultimate term of reproach to be hurled at a horse no other term of abuse—or endearment—had kept from stumbling.

CHAPTER XII

The Stoyánoff *coup d'état*—Russia and Bulgaria—The Constantinople Conference—Alexander III. and his nephew—"A saddle on a cow"—Sir Robert Morier—Lob-nor—Serbia invades Bulgaria—Jomini—Prince Alexander takes Pirot—Biela's comet—Schouvaloff and Spain—The state of Europe—First meeting with Sir Robert Morier—A strange beast—A king's funeral—The Duke of Wellington—Queen Isabella—Russia and Prince Alexander—Bismarck and the Battenberg marriage—A State secret.

It was a troubled year so far, and destined to be so to the end. Hardly had we begun to settle down in peaceful mood after the Afghan quarrel when like a thunder-clap from a clear sky came the Stoyánoff *coup d'état* of the 18th September (1885), the proclamation on behalf of Eastern Roumelia of union with Bulgaria.¹ There was no bloodshed; Prince Alexander entered Philippopolis a few days later amidst the greatest enthusiasm; but, once more, we were in the throes of a European crisis of the first magnitude.

The Tsar's Government had been taken completely by surprise; when the news reached St. Petersburg the Emperor and de Giers were away, while of all the foreign ambassadors the only one not absent on leave was the

¹ The Treaty of Berlin (1878) constituted an autonomous Bulgaria north of the Balkans, tributary to the Porte. South of those mountains the Province of Eastern Roumelia, inhabited chiefly by Bulgarians, was granted administrative autonomy. The Ruler of Bulgaria was to be a Prince freely elected by the people, but confirmed by the Porte and approved by the signatory Powers. The first Prince of Bulgaria was Alexander of Battenberg (see p. 406).

Austro-Hungarian. The Powers, all except England—*perfidie Albion*¹—against whom for a time the Russian press raged more than ever—were scandalised, or pretended to be so, at the infraction of the Berlin Treaty. Russia was furious at the accomplishment without her aid or knowledge and by a more and more hostile Bulgaria, of what the Powers, and above all England, had balked her of in 1878; she denounced the union and even went the length of urging the reconquest of E. Roumelia by the Porte, so completely had the rôles been shifted.

It is unnecessary to rewrite at length the story of the crisis. The majority of the Russian papers professed to believe that the Bulgarians were still at heart, pro-Russian, and only debauched by a shameful Constitution, and misled by an alien prince, who since 1883 had become the open enemy of Russia. But in course of time the bitter truth was forced upon them that, whatever the explanation, the Bulgarians as a whole were devoted to their ruler, resented the Emperor's attitude towards him, and wanted no interference from autocratic Russia. To one who appreciates as I do, to the fullest degree, the generous and heroic self-sacrifice made by Russia in 1876 and 1877 in behalf of the Balkan Slavs, the disastrous political mistake of endeavouring to force her own views and ideas of government on the people she had emancipated is one of the most lamentable things in modern history. We are still feeling the results of it—pray God they may be no worse.²

Of Russian publicists, Aksákoff alone recognised that a return to the *status quo* was impossible. He found excuses even for Prince Alexander, and was ready to accept the good done without too carefully scrutinising the means by which it had been effected.

¹ The corresponding Russian term was *Khitrie moreplávateľi*, i.e. "cunning sea-farers."

² This was written shortly before the Bulgarians joined the Central Powers, Oct. 1915.

It was at Russia's suggestion that a conference of ambassadors was called at Constantinople. Her own position was an embarrassing one. Only the removal of the Prince could soothe her wounded feelings, restore in some measure her outraged dignity—but humiliating as it was, she had to recognise that to insist on his removal would further exasperate the Bulgarians, and, in view of England's attitude and in the absence of genuine support from the Central Powers, might well bring about a war in which she who had so nobly freed them would find herself in the impossible position of having to kill Bulgarians, with the Turks as brothers-in-arms, and nominally, at least, on behalf of the Turkish Sultan!

Had not Alexander III. been inspired by personal feelings against the Bulgarian ruler, had he been able to realise that what might be good for Russia was not necessarily good for the little State his father had created—was at all events not to be forced upon her—the history of Europe would have run a different course. But this, with all his good qualities, was too much to expect of him, and, for the moment, he had St. Petersburg, at least, behind him. Not so Moscow, where the Slavophiles were up in arms at the mere idea of hounding on Turkey to attack even erring brother-Slavs.

Schouváloff, as a way out, proposed a mixed occupation by all the Great Powers, pending a general agreement, and for a few days his idea found favour. Probably, indeed, this solution would have been adopted had not a distracting situation been ended by another of those dramatic strokes of which the Balkan States, in their brief existence, have been so lavish.

The Bulgarian army was largely officered by Russians, as, indeed, was only natural, but the Tsar, in his anger, had recalled the Russian officers from Eastern Roumelia and forbidden those in Bulgaria itself to cross the frontier southwards; and he had struck Prince Alexander's name off the roll of the Russian army—this, too, on

receipt of information of doubtful authenticity, to the effect that the Prince had said in a loud voice, when addressing a regiment just arrived at Philippopolis, that the day when he saw the national troops at last under the exclusive command of Bulgarian officers was the happiest in his life. He was reported, moreover, to have spoken disparagingly of the Russian officers as having left their posts in the hour of danger. It might well be expected that an army so depleted as to its commissioned ranks would, for a time at least, be of little use as a fighting force. What follows is, for that reason, the more remarkable.

On the 9th November my diary reads peacefully enough :

Mourino. Flocks of pine-grosbeaks feed on the berries of the mountain ash, which still hang in great clusters from leafless boughs. Like some unfeathered bipeds this fruit is never at its best till the frost has touched it. Wax-wings, too, are about—handsome, quarrelsome birds, with large and very toothsome livers !

Schouváloff said to me lately : “ The calling of correspondent sits on you *kak sedló na koróvye* (like a saddle on a cow—a Russian proverbial expression for the incongruous). Look at your colleagues ; they send every other day statements that the Servians have crossed the frontier, etc., and correct themselves in between. That’s the way to keep it going ! ”

Of his brother Paul, ambassador in Berlin, he told me that the Russian Government was very pleased with him ; but Paul himself said that if only his money affairs allowed it he would much rather spend the rest of his days in Courland, at Ruhenthal and Salven.

He had been induced by a Jewish officer named Adelson, for whom he had procured advancement to the high rank of general-adjutant, to put all his money, some 400,000 roubles, into house property in St. Petersburg. It proved a very bad investment at the time and crippled him seriously.

Sir Robert Morier had now been appointed to succeed Sir Edward Thornton, and the story ran that the Moriers

would cut a great dash ; he with horses, carriages, etc., Lady Morier with her dresses, which she " never wore twice " ! Great perturbation in the diplomatic world in consequence !

These rumours had little foundation in fact, though the Moriers lived in style, entertained freely, and were from the first a social success, a success in which Miss Morier (a god-child of Queen Victoria, now Lady Wester Wemyss) had a full share.

But to return to Bulgaria :

Russia was willing to consent to personal union on one condition only, namely, that the ruler of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia should not be Prince Alexander of Battenberg. If the rest of the Powers agreed to replace him on the throne of Bulgaria by Prince Waldemar of Denmark, or some such nonentity, Russia would make no further difficulties. If, on the other hand, Europe refused to decree the deposition of the Prince, who (to use the words of the *Nóvoe Vrémya*) had no right to retain his delegated rule because he had no longer the confidence of all the great Powers, Russia would insist upon a return to the *status quo ante*. Germany and Austria, it was thought, supported this attitude of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg. The whole question, therefore, now turned on Prince Alexander's resignation, or, failing that, his deposition.

On the 14th November Schouvaloff came back from a visit to Moscow. " Well," he asked, " what news ? " " Little enough ! " " Ah ! I felt from the first that the dismissal of Prince Alexander (from the Russian army) was a mistake. It has fallen flat. It has shown a spirit of hatred and persecution on the part of Russia which is out of place, to say the least of it—so high-handed, too, treating the Prince as if he were Governor-General of a Russian province ! It has spoilt our cards at the Conference, where England now takes up what should have been our rôle. And, after all, the alleged offence

is still a matter in dispute. We hear now from Sofia that he denies having used any words derogatory to Russian honour. By the way, I saw your telegram reproduced in the *Nóvoe Vrémya*."

I went on to lunch at the Hôtel de France and englished part of Prjevalsky's latest letter (the 5th) for the R.G.S. while eating—more to keep off intrusion than anything else. A fine picture of desolation that description of the country round Lob Nor! I had just finished translating it when in came a diplomatic friend with the news of Serbia's declaration of war and invasion of Bulgaria!¹

Next day, Sunday, I went to see Schouváloff, who remarked, especially, on the stupidity of King Milan, who by declaring war, not against the Sultan but against Prince Alexander, had proclaimed the independence of Bulgaria!

From this time the Russian press, whose fury had been hitherto directed solely against England, turned upon Austria, at whose instigation Milan was supposed to have acted.

On the 16th, Schouváloff, after the meeting of the Council of State, said: "There is no further news. I spoke to de Giers, who told me that our policy was to advise the occupation of Eastern Roumelia by Turkey, taking advantage of the fact that it is now denuded of troops in consequence of the Serbian invasion of Bulgaria. This would *de facto* restore the *status quo*. You must not, however, telegraph this. As I have told you before, Russia does not object to the personal union *except under Prince Alexander*. As to his present throne, Russia has every reason to desire his removal, but will not undertake to effect it. There is no fear, at present, of a European war, for the three empires maintain complete unanimity. De Giers asked me for details as to the proposed mixed

¹ The invasion was due to Serbian jealousy and to King Milan's belief that the task was an easy one, victory certain.

occupation in 1878, which I gave him. England was then to take part in it—with land forces. It is too soon to say what will be done if Turkey refuses to act, but the Sultan is displaying extraordinary vacillation, and indeed, that is just now our chief difficulty."

On the 19th the Prince Alexander's brilliant victories over the Serbians at Slivnitza and Tsaribrod changed the whole situation. To resume my diary :

21st November. Dined with the Kioers at the Danish Legation—the General, his wife and family, the Chrestulescos (Roumanian minister) Baron Jomini and wife, and General von Werder. Jomini said that the invitation to Russian officers to witness the Indian manœuvres was due to him, as he had urged on Lord Dufferin the good effect it would have on the Hindoos, shewing them that the Russians were friends of England. Yet the *Moscow Gazette* calls it another coarse English attempt to blind the eyes of the said Hindoos and persuade them that Russia is content with England's "virtual absorption of Herat" !

One anecdote Jomini told me was as follows : He was in Germany with his Emperor on some occasion and had to partake of numberless dinners. He remarked once to a German officer sitting next him : "How terrible it is that we have not only to eat these dinners but to digest them !" "Ah !" said the German, "in the next life, you know, those who have been good on earth will eat good things all day long in Heaven, which the wicked will have to digest for them in hell !"

The successes of the Bulgarians in the field had done much to produce that revulsion of feeling in their favour amongst the Russians which the Serbian invasion had failed to effect. The Bulgarians might have shown ingratitude, but the Serbians had set them the example. Prince Alexander was, perhaps, the tool of England ; King Milan was undoubtedly that of Austria ; and while Russia had every hope of regaining her influence in Bulgaria, she could have none whatever of recovering ascendancy at Belgrade. Also, the Bulgarians had now learnt that they could not fly in the face of Europe with

impunity, and might be more reluctant to act without Russia's advice and protection in future. At all events, Russia, in taking the lead in an endeavour to bring about a satisfactory settlement, made a fair bid for their gratitude which, in accordance with the well-known cynical definition of that virtue, was likely to be enhanced by the fact that in spite of Slivnitza their position from a military point of view was still critical. On the 27th, however, Prince Alexander at the head of 50,000 men crossed the Serbian frontier and captured Pirot. This brought on a threat by Count Khevenhüller, representing the dual empire at Belgrade, of Austrian intervention. For a time there was something like a panic, and the press vapoured as usual, but to me at least it was evident that things were quietening down. I knew a great deal more than the papers did, for I knew that Khevenhüller's action was quite unauthorised, that the three Emperors were for the present really at one, and that no further complications were to be expected. It had been a strenuous time; winter had now set in; elk were reported to be moving; so, on the 27th, I drove to Mourino and thence to Ostramánsha, nearly four hours further, in a country sledge, starting at 5.30 p.m., and on the way enjoyed a sight few indeed can have seen in such perfection.

I lay on my back, on a bed of hay, wrapped in my *dokhá*, with, of course, *valenki*¹ on feet and legs, and presently the star-shower, due to the passage of the earth through the tail of Biela's comet, became visible in extraordinary splendour. The night was miraculously clear, and the stars or meteors shot radiating from a point near Cassiopeia in tens, and hundreds, and thousands, very many of them being brighter than stars of the first magnitude and not a few far exceeding these in

¹ The *Dokhá* is the Siberian fur-coat of reindeer with fox or other fur for lining, skin to skin; *valenki* are boots, to the knee or higher, made of felt.

apparent size and brilliancy. One, in particular, just as we had passed the fir-tree knoll, ten versts from Mourino, not only lit up the snow-covered ground but illumined the whole sky, and, like several others, seemed to burst in a blaze of *blue* light, leaving a *red* trail behind it for many seconds—so that I looked away three or four times and back again to find, apparently, the trail still there. Towards midnight the sky was if possible more marvellously limpid than before. Very few meteors were now to be seen, but the planets and fixed stars shone with a brilliancy I may have seen equalled but never anywhere surpassed. The thermometer stood at—16° Réaumur, say 2° below zero, Fahrenheit.

It was very beautiful while the stars were falling ; yet after a time the eyes grew fatigued, the mind restless and increasingly so—almost, indeed, to the point of anguish ; after which the solemn majesty of the accustomed stars and planets—moving *ohne Hast ohne Rast*, but still shining with supernal brilliancy—was a deep relief. The thought occurred to me that if such restlessness had been the normal condition of the sky, the human mind would be quite other than it is ; or, may be, would never have developed.

On the morning of December 3rd I went to see Schouvaloff, who told me he had been waked up at 3 a.m. by a personal message from the Emperor asking if he would go to Madrid to represent him at the funeral of Alfonso XII. "Of course I have to go, and must start to-morrow ; a six days' trip in the train for me, who cannot well bear two !" He asked me what sort of climate it was at Madrid, and I quoted the saying : "*El aire de Madrid es tan sutil que mata a un hombre y no apaga a un candil.*"¹ "Do you mean to say that you know Spanish ?" "A little. I read it—*Don Quixote*, especially, and the old chronicles and ballads. I was for

¹ "The wind of Madrid (from the Guadarama) is so subtle that it will kill a man yet not blow out a candle."

a short time in South America." "Really, you English are extraordinary people! I have known you intimately all this time and never dreamed that you had crossed more water than the Channel!" "But why do they send you?" "I suppose it is considered desirable to give some support to the monarchical principle in Spain! Tell me, who is the English ambassador at Madrid?" "Ford; but probably Lord Rosslyn or another will be sent out as special envoy—he is related to the King in some way and attended his marriage."

Schouvaloff then gave me information which enabled me to declare once more and most emphatically that, contrary to general opinion and in spite of the splutterings against Austria in the Russian press, the good understanding between the cabinets of St. Petersburg and Vienna had not suffered from the implied threat of an Austrian occupation of Serbia—on the contrary!

Count Khevenhüller, as stated, in his anxiety to bring about a cessation of hostilities, had exceeded his instructions; but he had promptly been recalled and the earnestness with which Count Kalnoky immediately set to work to reassure the Russian Government as to the intentions and loyalty of Austria were categorically endorsed by Prince Bismarck, thus proving that, notwithstanding the abortive result of the Constantinople Conference, the peace of Europe was not seriously threatened. In competent circles, moreover, it was believed, and rightly as the event proved, that the war was at an end, in spite of the bellicose telegrams which continued to pour in from Belgrade and Sofia.

The three Empires steadily adhered to a joint programme based upon the maintenance of the Treaty of Berlin and involving, logically, a return to the *status quo ante*, but the military successes of the Bulgarians had forced even the Tsar to waver in his attitude towards Prince Alexander.

"Political predictions," I wrote, "are always hazardous,

but there is very good reason to anticipate that the outcome of the present situation will be the personal union of Bulgaria and Roumelia under Prince Alexander," a prediction soon fulfilled.

Seeing Schouvaloff, again, in the afternoon (he had just been to see de Giers) I read to him what I had written for the *Standard*. He said: "You may add, after the words 'peace of Europe . . . not seriously threatened,' *unless—and great stress is laid on the exception—by England's continued opposition to the policy of the three Empires*. De Giers has just told me this, and that Morier, who had been with him, had read a despatch to the same effect, which he had drawn up to send to his own Government."

A few moments later an officer came in from the War Office bringing the count (to his surprise, for the F.O., rather, was involved) 250 *chervóntsi* for journey money—gold 3-rouble pieces, wretchedly coined, and used only for the army. I had never seen them before.

The Russian press all this time continued to be very hostile to Austria; and, had it not been for Schouvaloff's positive assurances, I should have credited the apparent tension between the two countries.

It was on the 4th December that Schouvaloff left for Spain, very reluctantly. Grosvenor told me that day that one of his subordinates, meaning well but without consulting any one, had asked the new ambassador to let him introduce me, but Sir Robert thought Grosvenor himself the right person to do so, and the latter proposed to take me to him at noon next day. I objected that I should not be in St. Petersburg, and it was agreed that the meeting should be postponed. On the 7th I received a note from Grosvenor: "Sir R. Morier has desired me to ask you whether as the easiest way of making his acquaintance you would like to dine at the Embassy on Wednesday." I accepted, of course, and on the 9th, accordingly, I dined at the Embassy, and had my first meeting with Sir Robert Morier. After dinner he spoke

to me for some minutes, and again when I took leave. He expressed strong disapproval of those in England who kept writing and speaking against Russia on every possible occasion, especially the *Standard* in its leaders. "Your telegrams I have read, and I found them fair and moderate. Our policy is to make India safe, and that I believe requires two and a half years. During that time it is folly to keep goading Russia as we do. Russia has great interests in Central Asia and in Bulgaria; and we are unreasonably suspicious, always acting on the principle *chercher midi à quatorze heures*, though some rush to the other extreme and extol everything that Russia does. Our policy on the Bulgarian question is sound and sensible. We do not insist on altering the treaty of Berlin, but refuse to part with the *liberty* of altering it, if desirable, in conjunction with the other signatory Powers—the only way in which it can be done.

"The Emperors decided at Skierniewice and Kremsier to sink their differences for a time and direct all their efforts to those points upon which they are agreed. But there is always the unexpected to fear. Yesterday, imagine my astonishment, when a seal came up through that hole they've cut in the ice [to bring the bridge of boats up by] and clambered out on to the frozen surface! It was immediately attacked by the passers-by and took refuge in the river. Now Russia is like the Neva—a vast, dull, frozen surface, but you never know what strange beast of an event may turn up at any moment!" From my diary:

29th December. Went to see Schouvaloff who had returned last night from Spain, after spending a week in Berlin. He told me he had just seen de Giers and Vlangali. He had heard abroad that a reconciliation was expected to take place between the Emperor and Prince Alexander. Bismarck, with whom he had two long interviews, had even made him proposals based on this supposition; but here, at the F.O., he found that they knew nothing of it; on the contrary, the Emperor maintained exactly the same attitude to the

Prince as before. Nor did he hear anything of the latter coming to St. Petersburg. "In truth we have got into an awkward position owing to this open hostility to him, for he has become the popular hero and it will be very difficult, indeed, to get rid of him. He has a great supporter, too, in England, who wants not merely the personal union but the greater Bulgaria. You haven't sent anything lately? Because there was nothing to send? What a reason! Oh, I know there has been very little doing; my brother did not receive a single telegram from our Government during the week I was with him in Berlin. But a correspondent must just invent a lot of twaddle if he can find nothing else. You are not fit to be one." "I know it (with a shrug and a smile); but how about Spain?"

"Well, when I got to Bordeaux we had missed the connection by one hour so I thought to arrive on the very day of the burial, in the midst of it in fact: and schemed to dress in the train and go straight to the ceremony. On reaching Madrid I found that it had been put off for two days; so that it only took place the second day after my arrival. At Cologne I asked for my warm *shinel*, and my servant—the idiot!—said that he had left it behind in Berlin, because we were going to a hot climate! A hot climate indeed! In Spain, on the way back, there was an inch of ice inside the carriage windows, and no heating apparatus, nothing but a wretched foot-warmer, which was no good at all. I have only managed to come through alive by the help of a *capote de monte*, as they call it, which I bought in Madrid!" He sends for it and makes me put it on. "It suits you very well; with a *sombrero* you would be quite the Don!" It was just a *poncho* such as I had worn in South America, but with the slit worked into the form of a collar, to button round the neck. "A gentleman came up to me in Madrid and said 'Ah, my dear Count Schouvaloff, so glad to see you' etc. I had never set eyes on him before, to my knowledge. It proved to be Forbes, British Minister!" "*Ford* you mean." "Well, perhaps Ford; it's all the same. Ever after that they sat me next him on the score that we were old friends. A good fellow, but, dear me, not brilliant! so I was pretty well bored."

"Did you meet the Duke of Wellington (who, and not Lord Rosslyn, represented the Queen)?" "O yes! Imagine my

surprise! At the funeral we sat each on a sort of throne; and his was next mine. He came in late—Englishmen always do. Well, I saw a little man in yeomanry uniform come in and sit down, so podgy that his chin, sitting, nearly touched his sword-belt! He turned to me and said: 'How are you my dear Count Schouvaloff' and, to my astonishment, I recognised a Colonel Wellesley I had known in England, an officer who had then no title and, I should think, nothing but his pay. *Chort yevó znayet kak eto u vas diélayetsa* (the Devil only knows how you manage these things!)—one day a plain Colonel the next a Duke! Well, at every pause in the service he leaned towards me and growled, 'Ugh, ugh, when shall we get lunch, Count?' or 'I say, Count, I want my lunch!' I was quite afraid some of the Court people would hear him.

"I don't think much of the Spanish people; such a funeral they gave their king! The shops were all open; the theatres and operas going on as usual; the town as lively as possible. No one seemed to care a bit. The King's mother (Isabella) appointed me an interview at 1 p.m., just before the funeral! She is old and—well, not beautiful. I began: '*Votre Majesté! son auguste Majesté, mon Empereur, m'a chargé! . . .*' 'O, oui'—very volubly—'*je suis sure qu'il a le même sentiment pour moi que j'ai pour lui*' . . . I began again: '*Mon Empereur m'a. . .*' '*Comment se porte-t-elle, sa Majesté?*' '*L'Impératrice?*' '*Non; l'Empereur. Elle se porte bien? Je ne le connais pas mais un de ces jours je ferai le voyage à St. Pétersbourg exprès pour faire sa connaissance*'—all this at lightning speed—'*Et pourquoi est-ce que vous ne venez pas me voir quand vous êtes à Paris?*' '*Je n'ose pas déranger Votre Majesté.*' '*Du tout, venez me voir, en ami,*'" etc., etc. The way the Count told all this and more with the Queen's bad French and volubility was very droll.

He continued: "The only decent person I saw was the young Queen and that's because she's an Austrian. The King's sister is married to a Bavarian prince. I did not even visit them. There is nothing to buy in Madrid. When I asked about anything we fondly imagine to be especially Spanish, such as combs, fans, etc., I was immediately referred to a '*magasin de Paris*'."

General Putiline was now announced and the Count said: "Show him in," then to me "he is the head of the Secret Police! Now we'll have some fun." In came Putiline—a

grey-whiskered little man, in civil uniform, with a plaque of some order on his coat. Schouvaloff treated him with mock politeness, urged him to look well after me as I was an English correspondent, and a most dangerous fellow, and gave him dry Malaga, a present from Spain, in a tumbler that had held tea.

In the evening I saw him again ; when he dictated to me !

"*The Journal de St. Pétersbourg* states that there has never been a question of entrusting General Voyéikoff with a mission to Sofia. I take this opportunity to give a denial to the rumours which have been going the round of Europe to the effect that a *rapprochement* had taken place between the Russian Government and Prince Alexander. This fact, indeed, constitutes one of the difficulties of the situation and is an obstacle to the solution of the present crisis. The Prince has lost the confidence of Russia, which would with difficulty consent to any enlargement of Bulgaria under his sceptre. The fact that the Bulgarian army obtained successes in the field cannot affect the attitude of the Russian Government towards the Prince, personally ; and the support accorded him by England is not calculated to modify the feelings with which he is regarded here."

I questioned him as to the attitude of Germany. He told me that as to any project of marriage between Prince Alexander and the daughter of the Crown Prince of Germany Bismarck had said : " As long as I am here I will never consent to an alliance which might entail our entering the field in support of the Prince." ¹

I tried to get out of him more of what Bismarck had said, but he parried my questions with " How can I tell you before I've told my own Government ? I go to Gatchina to-morrow. All I can say at present is this : Germany thinks that Prince Alexander acted in a way to forfeit the confidence of Europe but that his subsequent conduct and successes have so strengthened his position in Bulgaria itself that it will be difficult now to get rid of him."

30th December. Drove up to the Count's door (corner of Milliönnaya and Winter Canal) at 6.15 p.m. He was just leaving it with the Countess Stackelberg, his niece ; and the A. Bóbrinskys were just re-entering their carriage. They greeted me, and I walked with him and Countess Stackelberg

¹ See pp. 397 and 405.

to her house a few doors lower down. He then got into my *droshky* and I drove him to the Grand-duke Michael's palace, on the quay, where he was to dine before leaving for Moscow. He said: "I have been to Gatchina. I can and do talk freely to you when it is only a matter of my own ideas and opinions, but I cannot tell you State secrets." "I suppose not, unfortunately." "But I will say that after my interview with the Emperor I have not a word to alter in what I told you yesterday."

"We'll go to the Powder Works on Tuesday—there are three wolves there—and to Toksovo on Thursday. But you don't care for shooting now! You're in love with some confounded woman; they spoil everything!" which is often enough an elderly man's point of view.

CHAPTER XIII

The Wigan accident—A jealous husband—Prince Nicholas of Montenegro—"By order of the Tsar"—Death of Aksákoff—A single-clause Treaty—France and Russia—Prince Kropotkin—General Appert—Black Sea ironclads—A walk in the Crimea—Jewish gratitude—I go home—Batoum—Dizzy and the British public—Kidnapping a Ruler—The loss of a throne—"Scratch him off"—What Count Pahlen would have done—Gold or silver—A humorous liar—A story discredited—Herbert Bismarck and the Bulgarian deputation—Russian scandal—Rumours of war—An editor in a fright—Explosive bullets—A Dutch fire-eater—Pro-Russian Bulgarians; their miserable ending—The limits of patience—Camels in trousers—Attempt on the Tsar—Dhuleep Singh—Schouváloff and Constantinople—Election of Prince Ferdinand—Afghan Boundary settled—Death of Katkóff—Paul Deroulède.

SCHOUVÁLOFF went to Toksovo on the 8th January, 1886, and got three wolves to his own gun, which was great luck. I was not well, and unable to go—a touch of my old South American enemy, malaria. A week later I went there with him, when A. A. Bóbrinsky, Dietz and I each got a wolf; he and Campo Sagrado nothing.

Coming back, the horses of our *troika* ran away for a bit; Schouváloff gripped my arm, and showed other signs of nervousness, as he had on previous occasions when driving. This time he explained that he had never quite recovered his nerve after a terrible experience on the Great Northern Railway in January, 1876 (known as the Wigan accident), when, after his train and another had been in collision, a third train, an express, ran into

the wreckage. In his compartment were a father, mother and two daughters (I think). They were all killed. His own valet had his leg cut off. How he himself escaped he never knew. His courage in other respects remained unimpaired, as I had reason to know.

Thus, I was greatly alarmed one day when he told me that he was to leave next morning for the south of France to fight a duel with Count P. I had already some notion of the quarrel between them—a young and pretty wife who took pleasure in my friend's very harmless attentions. P. was not only jealous but foolish enough to show it in a very marked manner. Finally, not content with that, he peremptorily forbade all intercourse between the offenders, to which Schouvaloff replied that he was quite ready to efface himself but only at the lady's bidding. Then came the challenge, and as friends on either side failed to effect a reconciliation it was decided that a duel should take place at Monte Carlo. Schouvaloff's principal second was his brother Paul, whom he picked up at Berlin, if I remember rightly, on his way south. I received a message four days later which relieved my anxiety, and in the course of another week my friend reached home again. He explained that shots were exchanged once only, the seconds then declaring honour satisfied. He had fired so as not to hit his adversary, but the latter had evidently meant business, for his bullet had struck the rock against which Schouvaloff was standing so closely that a splinter had actually wounded his thumb—as he showed me. I asked him how he had felt at the time. He said "Absolutely calm; annoyed only at the stupidity of the whole affair. *Mais que faire, avec un imbécile pareil ?*"

On the 3rd February, Prince Nicholas of Montenegro arrived on a visit to the Tsar, who paid him extraordinary honours, waiting for him at the station attended by all the Grand-dukes and a brilliant suite. A guard of honour was furnished by the famous Ismailovsky regiment, the

band of which struck up the Montenegrin national hymn as the train drew up at the platform. The Prince was lodged in the Winter Palace. Next day there was a grand Court ball, at which the Emperor's guest was the central figure, and Schouváloff before setting out for it said: "I promise you plenty of information to-morrow, as de Giers, Vlangali and all of them will be there, and will bore themselves so intensely that they will be only too glad to talk!"

Two days later I met his nephew, Pável Pávlovich, who told me that he had had a long conversation with Bismarck before leaving Berlin, at luncheon, only Bismarck's wife and his daughter, the Countess von Rantzau, being present. The Prince spoke very openly and very violently against his internal enemies; more so even than in his public speeches at that time, sensational as they were. Amongst other things, he told him: "I fear you are preparing another disillusion for yourselves in regard to Montenegro," but, for once, even Bismarck was wrong. Pável Pávlovich—unlike his uncle and father—thought the Chancellor by no means a sincere friend to Russia; but that he also hated England and feared her wealth and the power it gave her of obtaining allies.

Schouváloff told me that at the ball the previous night Wolkenstein had said that there was nothing new, but abused the English ministry and Gladstone. Salisbury's foreign policy, on the other hand, was commended, he said, by Bismarck, and Lord Rosebery had already assured him of his intention to follow it. On the 7th my friend added that, according to Vlangali, the treatment of Prince Nicholas of Montenegro, which he tacitly admitted amounted to a political demonstration, was *vóleyu sámavo Gosudárya* (by order of the Tsar himself). English policy, so far, had not changed with the advent of Gladstone to power.¹

¹ Lord Salisbury's Government was defeated on the 27th January, and on the 2nd February Mr. Gladstone once more assumed office, to resign again on the 20th July.

On the 8th February Iván Serghiévitch Aksákoff, the celebrated Slavophil writer and agitator, died suddenly at Moscow of heart disease. I wrote :

" Born in 1823, the son of a well-known writer, Aksákoff was educated in the Imperial School of Jurisprudence, and from 1842 to 1850 was in the Government service, being employed on special missions on questions connected with Dissenters, internal administration, etc. He then took to literature. The *Moskvá* which he edited in 1867-68, received nine warnings, and was thrice prohibited, in less than two years, during the Ministry of Count Valúyeff ; this paper and the *Moskvitiánnin*, which he commenced after the second prohibition of the *Moskvá*, being finally stopped by order of the Council of State in 1868. In 1881 he founded the fortnightly *Rus*, which continued, with one or two forced interruptions, till his death.

" His decease will be counted by Russia as a national loss, by Slavophiles as an irreparable disaster. It will be regretted wherever purity of mind, loftiness of character, and unflinching devotion to high ideals and self-imposed duty are valued. His very enemies—and they are numerous in St. Petersburg—confess that he was *sans peur et sans reproche*, never swerving one hair's breadth from the path dictated by his conception of duty and patriotism for any consideration, whether of fear, blame, or praise. He was absolutely incorruptible at a time when few in Russia were so. It must be said, however, that if his sympathies were wide his views were narrow, and strongly coloured with prejudice. To the Government, he was a source of constant embarrassment, as witnessed by the whole series of administrative measures taken against him, ending with the warning issued a few days since for a violent attack on the foreign policy of M. de Giers. Imperialist himself, he had no sympathy with the very same feelings in other nations, and was bitterly hostile to England."

On 16th February, Schouváloff told me that Serbia was making desperate efforts to effect a reconciliation with Russia. " Milan has written a despairing letter to the Emperor, imploring him to take him under his protection ; but this is a secret and you must not telegraph it." " Oh ! " " Well, you may say that on Serbia's

part efforts have been made, but that they have had no success. It is not likely that with such a character (as Alexander III.'s) they would have!" On the 3rd March peace was restored in the Balkans by the single-clause Treaty of Bucharest.

On the 16th, General Appert, French Ambassador, presented his letters of recall, an event that must not be passed over in silence, for it created no little stir at the time, and the circumstances connected with it throw light on the relations between France and Russia, the unpleasant relations between them due to the extremist elements in the French Government which were responsible for Alexander III.'s long hesitation in abandoning the traditional Russian friendship with Prussia. M. de Freycinet, the French Premier, wanted, it seems, to appoint General Billot in place of General Appert, a bluff old soldier, who did better perhaps than the best diplomatist could have done at the Court of St. Petersburg, by acquiring the personal sympathy of the Emperor and Empress. The idea was divulged prematurely and had to be disavowed. But in January, 1886, M. de Freycinet released from prison Prince Peter Kropótkin, the Nihilist, who was serving a five years' sentence as a dangerous conspirator, and this step was deeply resented in Russia. General Appert protested warmly against it, and M. de Freycinet then decided to recall him on the pretence of ill-health. When the Tsar heard of it he spoke to the General and condoled with him on his illness. General Appert explained that he was perfectly well, adding: "It is not I who wish to go but my successor, General Billot, who wants to come!" "That is a strange proceeding," remarked the Emperor; and next day the Empress told Mme. Appert: "The offence is not to you but to Us." The letters of recall were nevertheless duly presented on 14/26th March, and General Appert left next morning. Mohrenheim, Russian Ambassador in Paris, went on leave after intimating that Billot would

not be accepted as *persona grata* at St. Petersburg, and relations at either end were for some time left in the hands of secretaries. Kropótkin had left France on the 25th February, for England, where he remained until the outbreak of the Russian revolution of 1917, when he returned, at last, to his native country.

On March 23rd there was a reception at the German Embassy to commemorate the Emperor William's birthday. Schouváloff was there, and called my attention to Colonel Trench's red coat (he being our military attaché, son of Archbishop Trench), saying: "Very appropriate. That's the colour of your Government now!" A week later, as the Emperor was going to the Crimea and my own leave was overdue, I left for Moscow and the south (Crimea, Constantinople, Italy and England). At Kharkoff, having seven hours to wait, I looked up Dillon, then a professor at the university there, and spent the afternoon with him. In the train, on leaving, I made acquaintance with Colonel C. E. Stewart, who had recently been political agent in Persia, but was now on his way to the Baku oil conference on behalf of the London Chamber of Commerce. He talked of his adventures on the Persian border and, in disguise, amongst the Turko-mans.

At Lózovo we parted company, he going on to Rostóff, I to Sevastopol, which I reached on Friday, 2nd April, at 2.30 a.m., the fourth day from St. Petersburg. It is only in backward countries that great progress is possible! A few years later one could go from St. Petersburg to Sevastopol without change of carriage in forty-eight hours.

On 3rd April the Emperor and Empress with their family arrived, and I attended the launch of the ironclads *Chesmă* and *Sinope* in their presence, afterwards dining with Captain Harford, our Vice-Consul, Count Gleichen and others. Harford told me that he still found isolated British graves in the thickets when shooting. He was a

confirmed pro-Russian, and it was delightful to hear him arguing in Russia's favour on all points with his great chum, Admiral Balk of the Russian Navy, who was if possible even more pro-English!

On the 5th I drove to the Monastery of St. George, picturesquely situated half-way down the cliffs on the Black Sea shore. It was on this day, though I learnt it somewhat later, that the union of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia was practically secured by the signature of the Convention of Top-Khané, the Porte recognising Prince Alexander as Governor-General of Eastern Roumelia.

Leaving Sevastopol on April 6th I walked with an Englishman, whose acquaintance I had made there, to Balaclava and on to Baidár, where we slept (33 versts).

We left Baidár next morning, walked to Alupka (35 versts) and slept there, in the house of a Karaïm Jew (the one hotel not being open), who treated us extremely well, and explained when I asked the reason: "Oh, in England you allowed a Jew to become Prime Minister; I can never do enough for Englishmen!"

On 8th April we walked on to Yalta, in delightful spring weather—violets, primroses, primulas, vernal squills, etc., abounding. Fully to appreciate spring one must come south towards the end of a northern winter!

This walk, obviously nothing of a feat, was in those days thought worthy of notice in the Russian press, and even attracted attention at imperial Livadia. From the Crimea I went to Constantinople, where, at the Embassy, I enjoyed for ten days the kindly hospitality of the Thorntons. The Sultan had just arranged for them to see all the sights in style—imperial carriages and *caïques* put at their disposal each day, etc., etc., by all of which I profited. Thence with Eddie Thornton I went by way of Varna and Vienna to Rome, and later to England.

During my absence from St. Petersburg took place the blockading of the Greek ports by the combined fleet of the great Powers, to compel Greece to come into line in regard to the Balkan settlement. The Russian Government continued on friendly terms with its neighbours, but the Russian press was once more roused to fury by the course of events in the Balkans. Katkóff started a campaign against Germany and against de Giers, likening the latter's 'pilgrimage' to Friedrichsruhe and Berlin to the humiliating journeys of the old Grand Princes to the Khans of the Golden Horde!

In June the Russian Government took advantage of the European situation to give orders to convert Batoum into a fortified naval port, a proceeding that roused some feeling in England, but not very reasonably. Russia had consented unwillingly at Berlin in 1878 to state her "intention of making Batoum a free port." No one could suppose that she would feel bound by this any longer than it suited her convenience.

It is true that England had agreed to the maintenance of the *status quo* as regards the Straits only on condition that Batoum remained a free port and unfortified; and the *Times* now claimed, logically but vainly, that Russia's breach of the Treaty set us free as to the Dardanelles and Bosphorus. But Russia had chosen her time well and had her way. I have given already an instance of how Gladstone, on occasion, bamboozled his own people. The Batoum affair affords an example, if any be needed, of how his rival Disraeli played the same game with equal success. The hot-heads of the Conservative party had no idea of letting Russia extend her frontier on the Black Sea coast; and when Schouvaloff, after a hard fight, obtained the inclusion of Batoum, they were not a little disappointed. Whereupon Lord Beaconsfield, in his great speech in the House of Lords on 18th July, 1878, said: "What is this Batoum of which you have heard so much? It is generally spoken of in society

and in the world as a sort of Portsmouth, whereas, in reality, it should rather be compared to Cowes. It will hold three considerable ships, and if it were packed like the London docks it might hold six ; but in that case the danger, if the wind blew from the North, would be immense."

Mr. Buckle, in referring to this statement, remarks : " This suggestion, considering the importance which Lord Beaconsfield had always attached to Batoum, did not lack boldness," which is, to say the least, putting it mildly !¹

I reached St. Petersburg on my return from England on the 6th August. On the 22nd—a Sunday—I was at Mourino, and not at all inclined to leave my friends' comfortable house and delightful garden to rattle twelve miles over the cobble-stones in a springless country cart to hot and dusty St. Petersburg. But the fear of something happening—Sir Robert's " strange beast of an event "—was too strong for me. I resisted all blandishments and drove up to town, promising to come back if all were quiet. I must mention that no telegraphic communication existed then between Mourino and the capital, nor does, I believe, to this day. I lunched at the Hôtel de France, and presently in walked a friendly diplomat, Baron Wacken, who told me of the Revolution in Bulgaria and the kidnapping and forced abdication of Prince Alexander ! I went on to the Embassy, and told Sir Robert, who had heard nothing of it, though Zinóvieff, sly fellow, head of the Asiatic Department, which included Turkey in its ambit, had called on him just before I did, and was closeted with him twenty minutes, while I waited. Sir Robert's language was forcible even for him ! It being Sunday, and nearly everybody away, it was impossible to get confirmation of the news, but I sent a telegram to my colleague in Vienna, and another—about the Afghan boundary, on Sir Robert's information

¹ *Life*, etc., vol. vi. p. 352.

—to London, after which in a contented frame of mind I drove back over those twelve miles of cobble-stones to dine at Mourino.

On the 27th of August I paid a brief visit to Harraka with Evelyn Hubbard and his wife. I caught a 1 lb. fish from the big rock just below the club-house in four minutes from arrival, including putting my rod together, and a 16 lb. fish, from a boat, within the quarter of an hour. This was no very remarkable feat at Harraka, but that is just what makes it worth recording! On my way back to St. Petersburg three days later, at Wilmanstrand, I passed Sir Robert on his way up and heard from him of Prince Alexander's triumphant return to Bulgaria the day before (29th August). We little thought that already he had committed political suicide!

I learnt subsequently from Dumba the details of this strange affair.

Alexander of Bulgaria, it seems, had plenty of physical but no moral courage. After the counter-revolution he arrived at Rustchuk with Stambúloff, who was dog-tired. Alexander also was worn out, but excited. He promised faithfully to do nothing without the consent of his minister, who went to another room to sleep. The acting Russian consul (Gregoróvich) called soon afterwards and the Prince, being told that the Emperor only wanted a golden bridge, etc., at once wrote out the fatal telegram.¹ Next day at Philippopolis, being now in a deplorable condition, he said to Stambúloff: "It's all over!" "Why? what do you mean?" "Look at this answer!" "Answer to what?" He explained *Stambúloff*: "Good God! why did you do it? *Enfin* . . . we must make the best of it!" The mistake cost a throne.

The Prince's telegram, dated the 30th August, and

¹ Another version is that it was the Prince's father Alexander of Hesse who urged the sending of the telegram. See *Times*, 11th September, 1886.

the Tsar's reply were given as follows by the Russian *Official Messenger* :

"Sire, Having again assumed the Government of my country, I venture to offer your Majesty my most respectful thanks for the action of your Majesty's representative at Rustchuk who by his official presence at my reception showed the Bulgarian people that the Imperial Government could not approve the revolutionary act directed against my person. . . . Russia having given me my crown it is into the hands of Russia's sovereign that I am ready to render it."

The Tsar replied :

"I have received your Highness' telegram. I cannot approve your return to Bulgaria, foreseeing its sinister consequences for the country which has already been so sorely tried.

"The mission of Prince Dolgorúky¹ has become inexpedient.

"I shall abstain as long as your Highness remains in Bulgaria from any intervention in the bad conditions to which the country has been reduced.

"Your Highness will decide for your own part what course shall be taken. I reserve to myself to judge what my father's venerated memory, the interests of Russia and the peace of the East require of me."

The *Times* on 3rd September declared that Prince Alexander, having sent him a telegram the tone of which reached the limit of conciliatoriness, the Tsar had replied with a harshness of sentiment and an asperity of language almost unexampled in history. On the other hand, the *North German Gazette*, Prince Bismarck having returned to Berlin, wrote : "For what then should we sacrifice the friendship of our mighty neighbour? In order to exchange it for good relations with the Prince of Bulgaria? Is that it? It is the very drunkenness of hatred which expresses itself in the press effusions of Messrs. Richter and Windhorst, and this hatred is directed against the German Empire!" Bismarck's rage was not lessened

¹ The Tsar had appointed him to proceed to Bulgaria on a special mission.

by the fact that the officers of the Prussian Life Guards had sent Prince Alexander a message of congratulation on his escape and return to Bulgaria.

Gregoróvich got into very hot water. The Tsar was furious: "How could a Russian Consul dare to go in uniform to meet the fellow?—scratch him off the list! scratch him off! scratch him off!" De Giers mildly ventured to remonstrate, pointing out that this petty *chinóvnik* had really done Russia a great service by putting Alexander in a position that left him no choice but to abdicate. With great difficulty the Emperor was at last brought to say: "Well, he may stay on at Rustchuk." As to the Prince, he had no choice left him. On the 8th September, accordingly, he announced his abdication, and left Bulgaria for ever.

A regency was then formed, the chief figure being Stambúloff, and the Grand Sobranie was summoned to elect a Prince, Russia's candidate being the Prince of Mingrelia. General Kaulbars was sent to Bulgaria to make known the wishes of the Tsar, which were meant and taken as commands and resented as such. Kaulbars vainly endeavoured to procure the postponement of the Grand Sobranie¹ to gain time for the restoration of Russian influence. He even made an electoral tour of the country, but failed utterly to achieve his purpose, and with the other Russian representatives left Bulgaria. The Grand Sobranie offered the throne to Prince Waldemar of Denmark, who refused it. A provisional government was formed which successfully resisted strong Russian pressure until eventually (1887) Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg accepted the vacant throne against the will of the Powers and especially of Russia.²

At the end of October, Schouváloff came back from

¹ *Sobranie* (Assembly) is applied to the ordinary representative body in Bulgaria. The *Grand Sobranie* is the Extraordinary Assembly which deals with the election of a sovereign, constitutional changes, etc.

² See p. 316 sq.

Vorónej, where he and his guests had this time bagged fourteen wolves and forty-seven foxes. I, for the second year running, had been prevented accompanying him by the unsettled position in the Balkans, and my feelings towards the kidnappers may be imagined! But without going so far afield I managed to get a good deal of shooting, as such entries from my diary as the following—a few out of the many—prove:

November 2nd. To Okhta at 7.30 a.m. with Sir Robert. Met there Schouvaloff and Astashóff. Got six foxes by luncheon time, I only one of them. Dined at Embassy. Ivor Herbert and wife (just arrived), Callender (Q.M.), Gough, Harford.

November 17th. Mourino. Cecil Wellesley shot a Greenland falcon, quite white. On reaching the Natural History Museum to be stuffed it was seen by the curator, who begged and obtained it for the national collection, as a great rarity in this locality and a very beautiful specimen.

Shooting at the Powder works. I drove down with Count Pahlen. Speaking of Lord Salisbury's speech of the 9th instant in which occurred the famous passage "A midnight conspiracy in which officers of the Prince *debauched by foreign* [*i.e.* Russian] *gold* had turned against the Ruler who had trusted them and hurled him from the throne," he said, "Had I been ambassador in London I should have packed up and left at once!" I wondered!

Von Schweinitz, on someone asking the time, said decidedly, "one o'clock." Other opinions being given I showed my watch. It was just one o'clock, and von Schweinitz said: "That's one of my peculiarities; I always know the time without a watch"—a faculty that might have been valuable three or four centuries earlier!

Dr. Krasóvsky, a delightful old person, the Court *accoucheur*, killed a tom-tit in mistake for a *ryábchik* (hazel-grouse, *gelineotte*)! He had only "seen something moving" among the twigs. We chaffed him a good deal. He took it most good humouredly, ending with "*vsyo takí oubil*" (all the same I did *kill* it!), which evidently quite satisfied him!¹

¹ As stated elsewhere (p. 238) the great tit, blue tit, and others of the tribe, brave with undiminished cheerfulness the rigours of the northern winter.

Weather disgusting, mild, muggy and dark ; horses splashing the mud right in our faces ; marshy woods ; ruinous wooden houses on the outskirts of St. Petersburg ; a loathsome and stinking atmosphere—ugh ! the custom being to ladle out the town's sewage from open carts and barrels on to the fields throughout the winter ! When a thaw comes the result is appalling. In the evening to the ballet where Mrs. C. told me the Emperor has decided the sugar monopoly question with the minority, that is with Katkóff. The usual front-row set at the theatre—Campo Sagrado, Greppi, Ghika, etc.

A few days earlier (November 20th) Sir Robert had come to see me. He wanted particularly to know whether the Bulgarian affair and the failure of Kaulbars (whose recall was announced that day) would lead to de Giers' downfall. He thought the Russian Government would have to find some scapegoat. He deplored Lord Salisbury's speech, but said : " After all, that's only our way of talking. ' Foreign gold ' meant, of course, not that the Emperor or his Government had bribed, but that the Slavophiles had done so ; ' silver ' would have been more correct, as I know for certain that barrels of roubles were shipped from Odessa, and care taken that they should all be old ones, without this Emperor's head upon them." He exclaimed at the astounding blunders of Russian diplomacy. I said : " Well, they have Ignátieff to fall back upon ! " " Yes, but he has made such a reputation for himself as a liar that it would scarcely be possible to appoint him. His own friends tell stories against him ! Nabókoff, for instance, one of the best. Arriving one day at one of the town stations with Ignátieff the latter offered to take him home in his carriage. ' But my own is here—there it is.' ' Oh no, that is mine.' ' Surely mine ? ' ' Dear me, no ! ' They got in, Nabókoff completely nonplussed, and drove off. Ignátieff then launched out into a glowing description of the horses, how they were given to him by the Sultan on a certain occasion, what the Sultan said, what he replied, and so on. Ignátieff's house was the nearer. He got out there,

and, saying good-bye to Nabókoff, told the coachman to take him home. When he got there and looked up to give the man a tip, he found it was his own carriage and pair after all ! ” Of course on this occasion Ignátieff was joking, satirising, indeed, in a way that proves his possession of a pretty keen sense of humour, the reputation as a liar he (literally) enjoyed.¹

Last night, Friday, there had been the usual reception at the Embassy. I did not go. Sir Robert told me regretfully that he had lost two hundred and fifty points at whist ! “ Did you see any signs of ill-feeling amongst the Russians ? ” “ None, and we had a rather larger party than usual. Why were you not there ? ” “ Well, I had been twice running, Sir Robert, and I don’t like to abuse your hospitality.” “ You are always welcome.”

On the 22nd November Sir Robert wrote me :

“ Will you come and dine with us Friday at 7½ o’clock—You will meet Pierre Schouváloff and Astashóff.”

On the blank leaf of this note I find, in my writing, the following :

November 24th. Schouváloff : “ The Grand-dukes are not coming to-morrow, after all ; they have another shooting on.” *I* : “ All the better ; it is not their fault, of course, but everyone feels a constraint in their presence. At luncheon conversation languishes ; we take refuge in champagne and *pâté de foie gras* ; the shooting suffers.” “ You will drive with me, unless (joking) you prefer to have a *troika* all to yourself. But come in good time—7 a.m. and away we go ! I must be there before my guests.” “ Now, did you ever know me late ? ” “ Always ! why I have even had to send for you ! ” “ Never ! Morier has asked me to dinner on Friday to meet you and Astashóff.” “ Very well. I breakfast with my Emperor that morning at the Aníchkoff Palace.” “ How comes that about ? ” “ He wrote to me just ‘ My dear Schouváloff, all the Council of State are breakfasting with me on

¹ Ignátieff was called “ Mentir-pasha ” in Constantinople, and on one occasion the Grand Vizier exclaimed in despair, “ *Oh, ce Général Ignátieff ! on ne peut pas croire même le contraire de ce qu’il dit !* ”

Friday. I hope you will not fail to come too ! ' " " Ha ! ha ! You are in favour again ! Wonders will never cease ! . Tell me the story of your quarrel with the Emperor." " Which Emperor ? " " Why this one (Alexander III.), when Tsarévich." " It's all nonsense. I never quarrelled with him ! " " Some people say you clapped him on the back and he resented it ; others that you had to report him for some affair with the Slavophiles or with a fair lady, when you were chief of the Third Section." " I know they do—the Empress and I often laugh over it and wonder where on earth people got the idea from. There's not one word of truth in it." ¹ " The Moriers 'receive' on Friday evening ; so you'll see lots of people after dinner—all the diplomatic corps ! " " Ugh, what a pleasure ! Can't one get away when the guests begin to arrive ? " " You can get away to the whist table, no further ! " " Well"—with a sigh—" now for my forty winks."

At the beginning of the new year (1887) I met General Kaulbars, fresh from his Bulgarian misadventure, at the Kioers (Danish Legation) ; but he was talking to Vlangali, and evidently not anxious to make acquaintance with an English newspaper correspondent ! On saying " Good-bye " to pretty Miss Lothrop he squeezed her hand so tightly as to jamb her rings (rather large ones, certainly) into her fingers, causing much pain. I remarked that it was a characteristic grip and explained his conduct in Bulgaria, which his face rather belied. To quote once again my note-books :

January 12th. 6.30 p.m. Hôtel de France. " Hullo, Harford, you are dining early ! " " Yes, I've just been to meet the chief (Sir Robert) and came in on the way. Count Schouváloff came with him (from Berlin)."

6.45 p.m. Countess Schouváloff's drawing room. I found them sitting together, he looking well. After greetings and insistence that I should stay and dine, he told me that Morier had tried hard to pump him on the way, saying, " but my

¹ In *Distinguished Persons in Russian Society*, London, 1873, p. 32, it had been stated of Count Schouváloff : " With the heir-apparent he has had many a quarrel, because he has discovered the young nobleman's (*sic*) correspondence with Aksákoff and other Slavophilists."

dear Count, you told me didn't you a little while back that between Germany and Russia . . . etc., etc."

He gave an amusing account of Count Herbert Bismarck's reception of the Bulgarian deputation, which had been sent by the Provisional Government to the various Powers to seek advice and, if possible, enlist sympathy. His father had told him to be as brusque as possible with them and tell them to make it up with Russia. Count Herbert described it very comically. Enter the spokesman, a little fellow with white tie and black tail-coat. He comes in holding out his hand. Count Herbert puts *his* hand behind his back. The Bulgarian, already flustered, begins "Your Excellency! Allow me to present my colleagues . . ." "Certainly not! By what right do you present them? Each can come separately and speak for himself." "But they are here to—" "Here to what? Let them wait! All you have to do is to seek a reconciliation with Russia." "But, how can we, when the Tsar has cut off all communication with us?—won't have anything to do with us?" "Well, you know his candidate.¹ Elect him! Then, perhaps, his Imperial Majesty may graciously condescend to acknowledge your existence." The other deputies were let in separately and treated after the same fashion.

"Herbert Bismarck is a great man already. He makes the intimate reports (*dokládi*) to the Emperor for the whole Empire."

I said to the Count "There have been all sorts of rumours—war with Austria; *you* sent on a mission, etc." "Rubbish! The Crown-prince Frederick said to me, 'I don't understand how your press can go on as it does, writing so against us.' 'But your Highness, look at the German Press! Why, they say the Tsar has killed your father's aide-de-camp (Colonel Villaume)!'"² *Countess Schouvaloff*: "They say, too, that Paul has had a duel with Herbert Bismarck!" *Schouvaloff*: "Nonsense! but Paul does, of a truth, say that the guard officers sulk with him (*lui boude*nt), on account of Prince

¹ The Prince of Mingrelia.

² What really happened to Villaume was that doing Swedish gymnastics after a heavy meal, he twisted a gut. The doctors had nearly given him up when some one had the happy thought to pour quicksilver down his throat, or so it was said! In any case he recovered; but the story got about that the Emperor had shot him!

Alexander." Countess: "Is the man really so popular?" "Extremely so, with the whole (German) army; but the Emperor has done something that has given great offence there; he has deprived him of the title of *Altesse* on the army list, though leaving him on it—a thing one cannot do. Even the Empress Eugénie is still called Empress; so was her husband called Emperor after his fall. As to the rumours they are simply due to bourse speculators and it is known now in Berlin where they come from." Countess: "But it was said before that the Tsar had killed Count Reutern!"¹ Schouvaloff: "Yes, that was of French origin." I: "Has the Tsar come to town?" Countess: "Yes, they left Gatchina at three this afternoon." Andréi Schouvaloff: "Bunge (Finance Minister) joins the *Conseil de l'Empire* and Vishnigradsky takes his place." I: "You are late, my dear boy; I telegraphed that a fortnight or more ago!" Andréi Schouvaloff: "It is said that Dondukóff-Korsákoff (Governor-General of the Caucasus) will be kicked out." I turn to Schouvaloff. "I heard that you would be appointed to the Caucasus, but, knowing that you refused it in 1881, of course didn't believe it." "No; were it offered to me again I should again refuse." Countess: "Dondukóff was here yesterday and how he swaggered! He said we should soon have a fleet in the Black Sea—four ironclads, I don't know how many torpedo boats, etc.! He also said: 'Our two points are Merv and Vladivostók: we ought to send out a lot of cruisers, etc., to Vladivostók and attack England's commerce. We should lose all our ships before long, and our men too; my son would be blown up, with them—never mind! We would cause a loss of millions meantime!' Dreadful man! How could he talk so of his son?"

The Countess gave me a silver salt-cellar for the New Year. Schouvaloff said: "It should have been an inkpot (we were talking French) for he doesn't write enough to his paper." I: "But perhaps the Countess gives me a salt-cellar *parceque mes correspondances ne sont pas assez salées*." Schouvaloff: "Bravo, Iván Ivánovich, you are coming on!"

Andréi said the French army was much better than the German now. Russia in case of war would be at Vienna in 10 days. The Germans were funks, etc.—all symptomatic,

¹ There was a long telegram from Paris on the subject in the *Times*.

as he is in the horse-guards (in the ranks), and being crammed by officers from the Nicholas Staff Academy.

At dinner Schouvaloff said: "Your Morier told me a good story in the train. Some one—I forget who—was saying to Talleyrand: '*Je souffre toutes les peines de l'Enfer!*' '*Déjà?*' . . ." I've brought a good story from Berlin, too. A Hungarian went to Vienna and broke his leg. He was put to bed, but would not have the bone set by anyone in Vienna, insisting that his own doctor must be telegraphed for from Buda-Pesth. The latter answered enquiring whether the case was very grave; it was terribly inconvenient, but if really necessary he would come. First of all, however, he must know where the leg was broken? The Hungarian wired back '*In the Stephanplatz!*' "

After dinner Schouvaloff sent round to de Giers to know if he would be at home, and got an answer that he would receive him at 9 p.m. shortly before which I left.

14th January, 1887. I said to Schouvaloff a little while back: "I should like another interview with (Dmitri) Tolstoy!" Said he, "So would de Giers!"

"At the reception yesterday," he went on, "at the Winter Palace, the Emperor spoke amiably to all the Ambassadors. To Laboulaye he said: 'I am pleased to see in what correct terms MM. Goblet and Flourens have answered the so-called "Bulgarian Deputation".' This was said, purposely no doubt, in the hearing of Sir Robert Morier. The Empress gave her hand to Count Wolkenstein only; but evidently relations with France are on the mend."

5th February, 1887. These last few days war rumours have increased to such an extent that the whole press of Europe seems to regard an outbreak of hostilities as imminent and inevitable—between France and Germany, at least. My editor, who wrote a few days ago to know if I thought there would be war between Russia and Austria, telegraphed yesterday: "*Universal belief here on eve of French German war what do you think: Mudford.*" I had three days previously wired that great confidence in the maintenance of peace was felt in the highest circles here and on showing Mudford's telegram to Schouvaloff he said: "I will guarantee you that there will not be war at present." "You are quite sure? Can I telegraph in that sense; in absolute confidence?—my reputation is at stake and my position as correspondent!" "Yes; I'm

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=UNIVERSAL BELIEF HERE ON EVE OF FRENCH GERMAN WAR WHAT DO YOU THINK=MUDFORD

quite sure." "People talk of Wolkenstein not having been at the ball last night but I hear he was ill?" "Yes, I think it was that." "And they say that von Schweinitz had a long conversation with the Emperor." "True, but not about this at all."

I sent accordingly a strong telegram (yesterday, 24th February) after dining with Countess Schouvaloff and Andréi—Peter being engaged to dine at the Moriers.

I went on to Harford's, to play whist, where Gevers¹ and Hardinge² fully confirmed what I had heard about the chances of peace and war. Gevers knew that both Laboulaye and von Schweinitz had assured de Giers most strongly of the peaceful intentions of their respective Governments.

By the way, the want of the simple aspirate in Russian led to curious results in regard to foreign names. We had a string of G's and H's together and Gevers (pronounced in Dutch *Havers*, more or less), Herbert, Hardinge, Harford, and Hugh Gough became Gevers, Gerbert, Gardinge, Garford, and Gugh Gough. Later Henry Howard became Genry Govard; Hubbard, Gubbard; Hohenlohe, Gogenloge! I had at first some difficulty in recognising in Pelgam, the hero of one of Bulwer Lytton's novels! General Hall, a Russian of English descent, was only known as Gall, and later, I had much trouble in finding a book on the Caucasus by "Vangalen," who turned out to be a certain Van Halen. In the same way W being represented by V (as in the Weller family), Wurts, Whitehead, Welby became Vurts, Vitehead, Velby!

On the 5th March I went to Schouvaloff's at 9 a.m., breakfasted with him and drove to the Powder Works, he with Pólovitseff, with whom he wanted to talk affairs of State, I alone in his *troika*, von Schweinitz with his own *chasseur* in another. On arrival, Dietz told us that three wolves had been at the carrion,³ and we arranged

¹ At the outbreak of the great war Dutch Minister at Washington.

² Now Sir Arthur Hardinge, lately British Ambassador at Madrid.

³ A dead horse put down to attract the wolves.

to go after them ; Dietz and the trackers went off, we to follow in an hour's time.

While waiting, von Schweinitz, for once, told us something interesting. He said : " Twenty years ago I was out shooting with the late Emperor when Count Fersen, then *Grand Veneur*, produced an explosive bullet and fired it at a small pine tree, which it shattered. The Emperor was much struck by this, and spoke in a way that made me expect something to be done. Not long after he took up the question of explosive bullets, and summoned the conference at St. Petersburg which decided against their use in war below a certain size.¹ The English representative was a general—I forget his name—who convinced me that it is better not to know languages. He could say nothing but ' No, no ! No, no ! ' but, eventually, carried his point. It was not long before the Franco-German War, and we knew that the Emperor Napoleon was preparing something a great deal lighter than one pound. It had to be decided by weight, as otherwise one might simply lengthen the cartridge. We, also, had something ready. I made my speech in German, and repeated it in English for the benefit of the English general. He was bent on the minimum limit of 1 lb. and kept volleying his ' No, no ! ' at me. Eventually the majority decided in his favour, and I gave in. It was in the days, you know, when, at Berlin, ' the Emperor (of Russia) wishes it ' was *un mot sacramentel*. If it had not been for that we should, no doubt, have entered the war of 1870 with explosive bullets." Schweinitz said further, about magazine rifles : " I think them unnecessary, but their adoption is a concession to the feeling of the day. They have, or are supposed to have, moments of advantage—in attacking, just before the

¹ The International Declaration of 1868 (St. Petersburg) renounced the use in time of war of explosive projectiles under 400 grammes weight ; the further Declaration of 1899 renounced the use of expansive bullets.

assault; and to put the finishing touch to a defeat—in defence, too, at the last moment—but what troops would keep the necessary coolness?" I remarked that Colonel Klepsch¹ had also disparaged them, saying that troops, so far, were unable to take full advantage of the present excellent weapons, such as the Russian Berdan, etc., and the fire, though more rapid for one discharge of the magazine, was not quicker in the long run, as it took longer to load, and moreover, at critical moments, troops would not be cool enough to change the magazine. Schouvaloff condemned General von Roon's order of the day to the troops of his district (Odessa), telling them that it was not the guns but the men behind them; they were not to care for magazine rifles, etc. Von Schweinitz said: "It was foolish of him to say it, but I agree with him as to the facts." Schouvaloff was right.

Pólovtséff told a story of an elk-chasse, in the course of which General von Werder, on the left, let fly at a fox—he who never could get his gun off! "Then General Cherévin, on the right, hearing the shot, fired at a hare; whereupon I, thinking the elk had come out, knocked over a capercailzie, which had settled on a tree in front of me—with a bullet. Of course, the result was that the elk went back!" Great indignation against the unfortunate von Werder. Another time de Vogüé (the author), who was next to the Grand-duke Alexis, seeing a herd of elk advancing towards his neighbour, let fly at them. They went back and escaped. The grand-ducal anger may be imagined! On being asked for an explanation, de Vogüé said he thought the right thing to do in such a case was to fire at the herd *in order to disperse it!*

That night Wurtz gave a dinner in honour of Gevers, who was transferred to London in consequence of a quarrel—*question de femme*—with his chief, Stutwegen, a fire-eater who boasted that he had fought seventeen duels

¹ Austro-Hungarian military attaché in St. Petersburg during many years—a most charming personality, and exceptionally well-informed.

and killed four of his opponents! He didn't frighten Gevers, who stood up to him manfully; but on a previous occasion he had sent the wife of the Belgian Minister, a feeble old gentleman, into hysterics, by exclaiming: "*Madame! je vous renverrai votre mari ensanglanté!*"—the cause of anger that time being a dispute about precedence between the ladies!

From the time when the difference arose between Prince Alexander and the Tsar in 1883 Bulgaria seldom left us in repose for long. The war alarms had hardly begun to subside, and my assurance that, barring accidents, there would be no recourse to arms was still doubted in many quarters, when a pro-Russian military conspiracy broke out without warning in Bulgaria, and again the peace of Europe was endangered. I had stated in a telegram of the 1st March that Russia neither desired nor intended the occupation of Bulgaria, but that her hand might be forced. The conspiracy was reprobated by the great majority of the people and the Bulgarian Government suppressed it with great promptness and vigour. On 5th March the leaders were court-martialled at Rustchuk, and on the following morning shot. The Russian papers, especially of course the Slavophil organs, were furious. The *Moscow Gazette* spoke of the executions as a "terrible massacre," and called the traitors "victims of loyalty to Russia." Komaróff's *Sviet*¹ declared they were Bulgaria's best sons, men devoted to Russia and so on. Now, such an incident might well have forced Russia's hand, as I feared. Fortunately, the regents were sensible enough to deliver over the conspirators of Russian blood to neutral keeping, and the Tsar, withstanding the Slavophil call, maintained his policy of non-intervention.

On the 9th March I went shooting with Pólovtseff and Schouváloff; by train to Tsarskoe, thence, by *troika* with Colonel Vasmund, to Ijóra. I got four hares out of seven

¹ "Light." This Komaróff, a shaggy chauvinist, was a brother of the victor of Penjdeh.

killed ; detestable weather, wet, driving snow. Countess Schouváloff, coming from Pavlovsk, joined us on the homeward journey. Schouváloff told me he had seen Lobánoff-Rostóvsky, Russian Ambassador at Vienna, who had been received by the Emperor on Monday.¹ His Majesty had determined to do nothing in regard to the Bulgarian executions. In fact nothing would move him to action but the return of Battenberg. I pointed out that a semi-official note in the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* that morning ended with the words : " Patience has limits—these limits have been passed." He admitted that Horn (editor of the *Journal*) saw Jomini, de Giers' assistant, every day ; but held that the note could not be attributed to the latter. In spite of appearances, therefore, this phrase must not be taken as referring to any contemplated action on the part of Russia.

Of Jomini, Pólovtseff said : " I was at the meeting of the Historical Society yesterday, at the Aníchkoff Palace, and sat between the Emperor and the Tsarévich (this also a bit of swagger). The sitting lasted over two hours, and the boy amused himself with scribbling or sketching something on a sheet of paper. When we rose Jomini took up the paper, and most cringingly begged permission to keep it as a *souvenir*. Fancy ! the old sinner ! The poor boy didn't know what to say or whether he was being laughed at or not."

The conversation turned on " antiques," and Pólovtseff told how he had found at Kolomna a jewelled Sèvres cup, with portrait of Marie Antoinette, which he recognised as missing from the set in the Tsarskoe Palace. After months of persuasion he at last got the old lady into whose hands it had fallen to sell it to him, and he then presented it to the Emperor or restored it to the collection ; but never got even thank-you (*merci, chien*) for it. He had done this sort of thing often and never

¹ Lobánoff succeeded Schouváloff in London in 1879. He was Russian Ambassador in Vienna from 1882 to 1895.

got thanked (probably because he was the sort of person people don't much like thanking, but that he didn't know!) He presented Napoleon III. with a fine MS. of Caesar's *Commentaries*, when he was writing his history—in this case, likewise, he was never thanked. I mentioned the piece of Henri II. ware from Golítsin's collection (just bought by the Emperor). Lumley (Q.M.) had told me a piece had been left at Christie's and the owner had never called for it, though some months had elapsed. Christie's telegraphed to Prince Golítsin, believing it to have been stolen from his collection in Moscow, and got the answer back that nothing was missing. Pólovtséff said he believed there had been something queer done there, some time back—sham pieces substituted for real to conceal a sale, or what not.

On the 10th March, dining at Hugh Gough's, I heard from Klepsch the explanation of the "limits of patience" note in the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, namely, that it was inserted on the responsibility of the editor without the cognizance of de Giers. It was, therefore, one of two things—a mere example of *trop de zèle*, or an attempt to force that Minister's hand.

At lunch next day at Wurts', General Tolstóy, who had estates in six provinces and was a great agriculturalist, told me he had just introduced camels in Samara, between the village opposite Khvalínsk and his estate near Nicol-ayeff (where I was in 1879). The camels drew sledges, and three did the work of five horses; they were *trouserred*—like the Gouda cows—and wore sheepskin boots. They were doing very well. All they require is a good warm bed to lie on. He was about to try them with light American ploughs.

That night there was a rout at the Moriers. Sir Robert greeted me with "How do you do, Mr. Baddeley! I haven't seen you for months and months (in reality about six weeks)." "Not so long as that, I hope, Sir Robert. The fact is I don't like to trouble you when I've nothing

particular to tell you." "Yes, but I like to compare notes from time to time." "I am only too honoured." "They do write such a lot of damned nonsense from here." "Well, you have seen, doubtless, that I have been very quiet and very pacific of late." "Yes, you have."

Two days later (1/13th March), the anniversary of the Emperor's assassination, I left home at 6.10 in a sledge, and had just turned the corner from the Moshkoff-pereúlok into the Milliónnaya, when Hardinge and Harford in another sledge overtook me and shouted: "Heard the news?" "What?" "*Only* the Emperor William dead and an attempt on the Tsar! We're off to the German Embassy to find out if it's true." I followed them. Von Schweinitz had come in tired from shooting and was asleep. At this moment Dumba came up, and we learnt from the Swiss that there was no truth in the report about the Emperor William, a telegram having been received from Berlin that very afternoon saying that he was in good health.

Dumba, however, confirmed the news of an attempt of some kind on the Tsar; so I went at 7 p.m. to Schouvaloff and found him and his wife and son at dinner. I told them the news, they not having heard it. Then I went to the Hôtel de France, and got off a cipher telegram, after which I wrote out an open and fuller one, which the censor refused, though acknowledging its accuracy.

Sir Halliday Macartney told me afterwards that on the 14th March some one from Reuter's came to him in London and asked him if he knew anything of the attempt on the Tsar. He did not. Reuter's man then said that he had been to the Russian Embassy, where they denied the fact most positively, as did Downing Street. He had come to Macartney as a last resource before going back to the office to send out all over the world the contradiction that had already been prepared. Macartney said: "Take my advice and do nothing of the sort!

I know the correspondent who sent it and am perfectly certain that it is true." Reuter's withheld their contradiction, much to their advantage. De Giers first heard the news *via London, i.e.* from me!

Next day I went to see Schouvaloff. General Putiline was with him and told him the whole story. Several conspirators with bombs had been arrested just in time.¹ At lunch at the hotel my secretary came in and told me the censor had received a Reuter's telegram from London saying that the news was in the *Standard*. "You certainly know how to manage your business," said that official.

I sent off another cipher telegram to London and a full account by train to Eydtkünnen. Open despatches were still, to my joy, refused, which I knew would ensure me priority. I dined at the Embassy with Bishop Wilkinson and others. Sir Robert said: "So there you are, Mr. Baddeley; you have treated us rather shabbily, I think." "In what way, Sir Robert?" "Well, I expected you to come and tell me all you knew about this affair, and now I have a telegram from the Queen herself, showing that the news is already in the *Standard*!" "But, Sir Robert, I sent nothing but the bare fact last night. I had that much from your own people. Now I can tell you the story in full detail." "Well, I must say that's pretty smart of you! While we were waiting to hear more, you got ahead with what you knew. Not bad! Now for dinner, and you shall tell me all about it afterwards."

About this time Admiral Greig died in Berlin, and Schouvaloff went there and brought back his friend's body to St. Petersburg, arriving on the 25th March.

On the 21st I had received a note from Mudford containing in reference to my cipher despatch of the 1st instant the phrases "uncommonly well done," "utmost satisfaction." I now wrote the following:

"Many thanks for your note. I'm very glad it succeeded.

¹ Five of them were hanged.

The others papers were too sceptical considering that the Kushk affair appeared in precisely the same way.¹

"I have seen Count Schouváloff on his return from Berlin with Greig's remains and he says, 'you may be as sure of peace as of my friendship to you,' which is the best assurance I could have."

Towards the end of April the Afghan Commission met in St. Petersburg, and at first gave little promise of a satisfactory conclusion. No slight sensation was caused when, early in May, Dhuleep Singh was smuggled into Russia by M. Cyon, Katkóff's agent in Paris and coadjutor on the *Moscow Gazette*, whose antagonism to England led him to take this doubtful means of endeavouring to stir up trouble for us in Central Asia and India. The Russian Government, however, as I was able to state on excellent authority, knew nothing beforehand of Dhuleep's arrival, and promptly set a strict watch on his movements. There were not wanting signs of goodwill towards England at this time, and N. Ilováisky, a well-known publicist of Moscow, urged even that the Afghan dispute should be made use of to force Great Britain into an alliance with France and Russia directed against the common enemy, Germany.

On the 1st June, General Bogdanóvich, another of the *Alliance Franco-Russe* band, was, by an Imperial order "permitted to leave the Russian service."

On the 14th May I dined at the Embassy, and afterwards took Sir Robert to Vártemiaki to stalk capercailzie, a new experience for him. Next day Schouváloff called and told me that de Blowitz's story of his telegrams to the Russians to enter Constantinople was quite correct.

The *Times* of 10th May had published the following from de Blowitz as an absolutely authentic account of an unknown episode of the Russo-Turkish war :

"To understand the violent disappointment of the Russians after the Congress of Berlin one must know the following

¹ The *Globe*, I remember, made merry at my expense.

incident which shows that Russia thought at the end of the war that she was absolute mistress of the Turks and of European Turkey. Count Schouvaloff, the Russian Ambassador in London, repeatedly telegraphed to the Russians to enter Constantinople, affirming that England would not move a finger against the occupation of Constantinople on condition that Gallipoli should not be occupied and that no attempt to blockade the English fleet should be tried. Accordingly, a telegram was sent from St. Petersburg to San Stephano and to General Ignátieff ordering the commanders to enter Constantinople and to occupy it, at any cost. The telegram in cipher was made unintelligible by the Turks, who themselves could not read it but had a shrewd inkling of its contents. Meantime Musurus was instructed to warn the English Cabinet of Russia's designs and demand help. The Cabinet met hastily and telegraphed to Lord A. Loftus to see the Tsar and tell him or his Chancellor that the occupation of Constantinople would be held a *casus belli*. The Tsar thereupon abandoned his intention."

We know now that it was on June 18th, 1887, that Count Paul Schouvaloff and Count Herbert Bismarck signed the secret "re-insurance" Treaty between Russia and Germany, by which not only was the Three Empires Treaty of 1881, renewed in 1884, again renewed, but by an "additional and very secret" Protocol it was agreed that :

1. Germany, as in the past, will lend her assistance to Russia in order to re-establish a regular and legal Government in Bulgaria. She promises in no case to give her consent to the restoration of the Prince of Battenberg. 2. In case his Majesty the Emperor of Russia should find himself under the necessity of assuming the task of defending the entrance of the Black Sea in order to safeguard the interests of Russia, Germany engages to accord her benevolent neutrality and her moral and diplomatic support to the measures which his Majesty may deem it necessary to take to guard the key of his Empire.¹

¹ *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 1879-1914*, by Dr. A. F. Pribram (trs.), Cambridge, Harvard University Press; London, Humphry Milford; Oxford, University Press, 1920.

Now, I find by my diary that Peter Schouvaloff was away from St. Petersburg, apparently abroad, from the 18/30th May to the 16/28th July, 1887, and, knowing well both brothers and their relations with Bismarck, I have little doubt that though Paul and Herbert Bismarck signed the Treaty, Peter and the Chancellor negotiated it. In any case, I am convinced that my friend was aware of its execution and cognisant of its contents.

On the 7th July, Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg was elected by the Grand Sobranie to the throne of Bulgaria.

On the 13th I called at the Embassy and saw Sir Robert, who said he had seen de Giers and West Ridgeway. The Afghan business was about to be settled, at last. As to Balkan affairs, he assured me there was nothing new. Russia stuck to her former position. As to the other Powers "each one is waiting to see what the other damned fellows will do."

The Afghan Delimitation Convention was signed in St. Petersburg on the 20th July after two years' negotiation.¹

On the 1st August died at Známensky, near Moscow, Katkóff, most doughty leader of the "Russia for the Russians" school. He had been editor of the *Moscow Gazette* since 1861, and had exerted unrivalled influence both in home and foreign politics.

Paul Deroulède at once set out from Paris to represent the French "party of revenge" at the funeral, and delivered an eloquent speech beside the open grave. This was on the 9th. On the 14th he arrived in Nijni Nóvgorod, where he was entertained the same evening by the merchants at a banquet, and, drinking a toast to the Tsar, ended a short speech with *Vive la Russie, Vive la France, vive la gloire des armes Russes et Françaises!* As the governor of the city, the notorious Captain Baránoff,² was present, this affair made no little stir in Europe, and of course gave great offence in Berlin.

¹ See p. 320 *sq.*

² See *ante*, p. 110.

Leroy Beaulieu, speaking of Katkóff's "guerres diplomatiques," declared that they dragged Russia into the war of 1877, which directly contradicts Cyon, Katkóff's principal French agent, according to whom it was Bismarck who for his own sinister purposes urged Russia on to war.

Katkóff was publishing, then, Tolstóy's *Anna Karénina* in his magazine, the *Russki Viestnik*, but refused to print the last few pages because in them the motives and heroism of the Russian volunteers in Serbia were mordantly disparaged.¹

¹ Sir Charles Dilke, *Europe in 1877*.

CHAPTER XIV

Courland again—Schouvaloff's descent—English diplomacy—How Sofia was won—Opposite estimates of Schouvaloff—A dishonest transaction—Bismarck and horse-racing—Lord Derby—Tailor and dentist—An eclipse—Finance and French novels—A Courland junker—"Look at my nails"—Queer lawn-tennis—Radstockism—Elk and elk-flies—Flax and mallow—Eyoub Khan—The Crown-prince Frederick—Bismarck and Russia—*Cuvée réservée*—Noah's vineyard—A notable gallery—French politicians condemned—Prince Ferdinand—Bismarck again—The G.C.B.—The Afghan Boundary—A lost opportunity—What Bismarck made of Germany and the Germans.

See map at end of volume.

I now went with Schouvaloff to Courland once more. In my diary I find :

14th August (1887). Riga. Dined at the Hôtel de Rome. With us the Chief-of-Police and his subordinate, a Lt.-Colonel, both of whom I have met each time, on the way to Ruhenthal, these seven years. They agreed unctuously, but no doubt truly, that when Schouvaloff was chief of the Gendarmerie each man knew what he had to do. Now nobody knows. Had Schouvaloff remained in office Nihilism would never have become what it is, and so on. Schouvaloff : "No, but it was not so much what I was and did as the absolute stupidity or incapacity of my successors—Potápoft, Mézentseff, and then Drenteln, who said, himself, that he didn't know what to do and would willingly have declined the post."

This chief-of-police knows no German, while as for Lettish he had probably never heard of it before arrival here. He comes from Kalúga. He didn't like the change and urged against it his want of knowledge of German but was told

"that is all the more reason for sending you!" Schouvaloff, to me, "What ugly mugs these Letts have!" "Yes, but I think some Russians must have Lettish blood in them, to judge by their faces; and many of them are quite Tartars in appearance." Schouvaloff: "Well even we may be of Tartar origin—many of the Tartars in St. Petersburg call themselves Schouvaloff."¹ "Do not the good looks in your family come from your Polish mother?" Schouvaloff: "Probably, but my father's brother was a very handsome man—you know his portrait in my room in St. Petersburg, with a beard."

18th August. *Ruhenthal*. Sitting on a bench in the *Tannenlaube*—sixteen spruce-firs in a ring eight yards in diameter. The largest tree is fully nine feet in circumference at five feet from ground; others of the trunks are very thin, but all are of about same height, say sixty feet or more, with no branches growing inside the circle. Here on the hottest day it is ever cool and shady. Schouvaloff remembers playing here with his sister, when they and the trees, or most of them, were young. He talks now, with an arrogance that in him, somehow, never seems offensive, of the blundering ways of English diplomatists and statesmen: "When in London I had to write to the Emperor as to Lord Lytton's appointment. He had asked what effect it might have—what sort of man he was. I answered 'It is as though your Majesty were to send Alexéi Tolstóy to Warsaw!' Tolstóy was a poet, a fine fellow (*slavny maly*), but could do nothing but write verses, not even dress himself without forgetting his necktie, or his sword when he came to Court, and so on!"

"Even Salisbury, at the Berlin Congress, betrayed such weakness! such ignorance! always trying to make some deep combination, out of which nothing ever came. I tricked him well at one of the preliminary meetings at Amptill's. I meant to get the Sanjack of Sofia for Bulgaria, on my own

¹ The nobility of the Schouvaloffs dates only from the commencement of the eighteenth century. My friend was a descendant of Count Peter Schouvaloff, son of one of Peter the Great's generals and lover of his daughter the Empress Elizabeth. He became Grand-master of Artillery, and in that capacity rendered great services to his country. He was accused of covetousness and cruelty, but that he was able and witty is proved by his correspondence with Voltaire, whom he persuaded to write the well-known *History of Russia under Peter the Great*, Elizabeth herself, through her paramour, supplying the materials.

account, though the intention was to leave it to Eastern Roumelia. Salisbury and the Austrians *ochen menyá nagrízli* (worried me severely) but the former said he would give it up if a Turkish garrison were left in Varna, which would not have suited us at all. The Austrians, on their part, wanted an additional slice to some place or other we didn't care a rap about, or how much was added to it. So I said: 'Very well, one or the other, but I must refer to my Government first,' to which I did not refer at all. But next day I said: 'Well, I agree to the Austrian proposal.' Salisbury began protesting: 'but I understood . . .' whereupon I broke in, 'You agreed yesterday to leave me the choice and I chose this.' There was nothing more to be said and Bulgaria got Sofia, entirely through me; for at St. Petersburg they did not mean even to claim it."¹

It is amusing to contrast this with the estimate of my friend's ability in a grossly unfair and most erroneous biography of him in a recent volume of the *Russian Encyclopaedia*, where we are told that "his nomination to London was unlucky for him, as he was incapable of contending with men of such great diplomatic ability as *Beaconsfield and Disraeli* [*sic*]. They invariably took him in with the utmost ease, and he was always the last to know things that he should have known first." On the other side, again, we have Kinglake's view in a letter to Mme. de Nóvikoff of 1st August, 1878,² in regard to the Salisbury-Schouváloff agreement of the 30th May: "Thanks to the imbecility of our 'mountebank' (Beaconsfield), Schouváloff obtained one of the most

¹ In the *Times* of June 27th, 1878, de Blowitz records "Schouváloff's great feat" of securing Sofia for Bulgaria as follows: "Count Schouváloff bore the brunt of the (English) attack and displayed such admirable tact and temper that he won the admiration even of his chief antagonists. As is already known his efforts were well rewarded. The town of Sofia and a considerable part of the surrounding country were incorporated into Bulgaria." To Lady Bradford Lord Beaconsfield writes (June 26th, 1878), "Schou. fights a difficult and losing battle with marvellous talent and temper. He is a first rate parliamentary debater, never takes a note, and yet in his reply never misses a point." *Life*, vol. vi. p. 328.

² *The M.P. for Russia*, vol. i. p. 531.

signal diplomatic victories that was ever won." And we know now from Lord Beaconsfield himself that during the most critical period of the Eastern Question, incredible as it may seem, a traitor in the British Cabinet enabled Schouvaloff, "the last to know things," to report to his Government day by day what took place in Downing Street.¹ So variously do men judge one another! As I am not writing a biography of Schouvaloff, but merely contributing, *en passant*, material towards one, I will only say here that whatever he was he was not a fool.

Schouvaloff (continuing): "The Khivan affair was very dishonest on our part. In accordance with my instructions I had given assurances that Khiva would not be taken, but Kaufmann took it on his own responsibility. I was for giving it up, and the Emperor would have done so; but Gortchakoff said our promise concerned the *town* of Khiva only, *not the Khanate*, and we need not take a square inch of the town—so said, so done!"

It will be remembered that these assurances were spontaneously and directly made by the Tsar through Schouvaloff when the latter was sent to England in 1873 on a special mission, to negotiate the marriage of the Duchess of Edinburgh.²

¹ *Life*, etc., vol. vi. pp. 209-211.

² See *Annual Register*, 1873, Appendix No. 3, Earl Granville to Lord Augustus Loftus, F.O. January 8, 1873.

"Having received information from your Excellency and from Count Brunnow that Count Schouvaloff, a statesman enjoying the full confidence of the Emperor of Russia, had left St. Petersburg for London at the desire of his Imperial Majesty I had the pleasure of receiving his Excellency on the 8th instant. He confirmed the fact that it was by the Emperor's desire that he had sought a personal interview with me. . . ."

In regard to Khiva the Envoy stated: "Not only was it far from the intention of the Emperor to take possession of Khiva but positive orders had been prepared to prevent it and directions given that the conditions imposed should be such as could not in any way lead to a prolonged occupation of Khiva.

"Count Schouvaloff repeated the surprise which the Emperor, entertaining such sentiments, felt at the uneasiness which it was said existed in England on the subject, and he gave me most decided assurance that I might give positive assurances to Parliament on this matter."

"Bismarck said: 'I have tried all policies and find honesty the only good one.' He also said (to Beaconsfield) during the Congress 'England will last as long as horse-racing; it is the bond between the classes.'"¹ Apropos of England giving up Batoum and then wishing to back out, Schouvaloff enlarged on the stupidity of the way in which we went to work about Cyprus, so secretly, and yet with so much fuss, when we might take not one but three or four islands and still be not a bit better guaranteed. "The English are always suspicious, seeing deep designs where none exist. The Germans are clever and even wise as diplomatists. The Austrians, too, manage their affairs *nye durno* (not badly). Italian diplomatists, Crispi for instance, are clever, but the French, English and Russians one more stupid than the other!" All this was apropos of the Russian circular-note on Coburg's entry into Bulgaria, threatening to regard the Berlin Treaty as null and void—*i.e.* biting off one's nose to spite one's face. "As if you said you would leave Ruhenthal because of some slight difference of opinion with me as to one of the keepers! For Russia, too, makes very good use of the Berlin Treaty when it suits her purpose—and disregards it when it does not—as in the matter of this 'free port' of Batoum."

Schouvaloff now told the story of his first meeting with Lord Derby. It was on the occasion of the visit to England lately mentioned. The train was delayed, so that he arrived late at Windsor, and the Queen allowed him to dine in his military uniform just as he was—*mufti* being all but unknown to him. Next to him on one side was the Duke of Cambridge; on the other a quiet gentleman in black, with knee-breeches, who, when not eating, held his hands crossed on his breast muttering to himself the while. Schouvaloff took him to be the chaplain and turned the conversation upon clerical matters. At last the Duke asked him in German—"Why do you talk 'church' to your neighbour?" "Well, isn't he the chaplain?" "Dear me, no! That is Lord Derby, Minister for Foreign Affairs!"

He went back to London and next morning, early, called upon Poole, who took a great interest in his case—the predicament of having no 'civil' clothes to wear—and in the course

¹ Lord Beaconsfield's own version is "So long as the English are devoted to racing, socialism has no chance with you." *Life*, etc., vol. vi. p. 331.

of conversation spoke familiarly of the Prince of Wales, hinting that he might manage a private introduction! This staggered my friend even more than what had occurred some years previously in Paris. On arrival there he was suffering from a violent toothache. He went to Dr. Evans, the American dentist, who, in the course of his operations, said: "I am going to attend the Empress in an hour's time, Count; if you care to come with me I am sure I can secure you a private audience of her Majesty!"

At this moment there was a trampling of horses, a jingling of bells. It was Count Pahlen calling, on the way to his estate a few miles off. Our conversation, or, rather, my friend's monologue, was interrupted.¹

At lunch Pahlen speaks of some friend of his and of Schouvaloff's as having deteriorated. "He actually took salt with his fingers!"—"I was glad to find someone in Russia to be shocked at it!"—"I did not say anything but my *look* was enough, as I laid down my knife and fork in astonishment! I assure you he didn't do it a second time!" *Schouvaloff*: "Well, I confess that when I am alone I do it, too!" *Pahlen* (with horrified look) "Pray don't—some day you will do it before people!" *Schouvaloff*, smiling, "Oh, *eto tolko narodnuyu politiku ya diélayu*," meaning, I only do it by way of practice to make myself popular if occasion arises!

That reminds me that once in Schouvaloff's house in St. Petersburg, at dinner, his boy Andréi, aged about sixteen, tired of hearing his father praising Western civilisation, exclaimed: "Well, I'm a true Russian anyhow—*look at my nails!*" holding up ten very black ones, such as those of which an English lady once said "You might grow mignonette in them!" Andréi was then at Katkóff's famous *Lycée*, founded by him in support of "Church and State."

19th August. Up at 4.15 to see the eclipse. At Kovno, 60 versts off, it is total. A misty morning. The German tutor and others gather on the roof. The servants had blackened bits of glass over the oil-lamps so effectually that

¹ This was a descendant of Peter Pahlen, Governor-General of St. Petersburg, one of the assassins of Paul I., who had created him "Count" two years previously (1799).

nothing whatever could be seen through them ! I prepared others for the Count and Countess and myself ; we went out to the bridge, and saw the whole phenomenon, but not well, for it was cloudy and misty. At the maximum occultation only the merest rim of the sun's disc was left, yet the light was strong enough to spoil the effect. I had read somewhere a marvellous description of the influence of an eclipse on bird and beast, full of phrases such as ' darkness visible,' ' mysterious brooding,' ' instinctive awe,' ' apparent infraction of the Laws of Nature ' (with capital letters), and so on. Here, at least, there was nothing of the sort. The darkness was no greater than in full moonshine. Shadows spread ; there was, in truth, a somewhat sickly, yellow light ; but I noticed particularly that cows, hens, sheep and horses were absolutely unaffected. They went on chewing the cud, scratching and clucking, nibbling the grass, munching hay, as though nothing out of the common were happening ! " Come along, Iván Ivánovich ! partridge shooting is much better fun," said the Count. So off we went and shot two brace each, and Schouvaloff got one double snipe.

The Countess is discontented because her brilliant husband does nothing serious, " only reads French novels, such a waste of really great gifts ! In St. Petersburg he will shew complete ignorance of a subject, say, of some important financial question, and at the Council of the Empire, two or three days later, he will get up and, to the astonishment even of his friends, make a speech about it that the Finance Minister himself must envy ! "

I had another clever friend who was reproached, playfully, for continually reading French novels in his city office in London. " How can you expect to make money?" " My dear fellow, I only wish I had done nothing but read French novels for the last ten years. I should be a much richer man." As he died, not long after, worth £360,000 his love of yellow-backs—by no means exclusive, for he was a very well-read man—would seem to have been justified.

One stag and six hinds of fallow deer were bought, and introduced here two years ago ; there are now sixteen. " In three years more, Iván Ivánovich, you and I will be going

into the park to shoot the stags marked out to keep the herd down." I hoped not !

I pleaded successfully for leaving one or two alleys in the garden without gravel ; there are plenty with it, and the green turf is so much more beautiful. There are no beeches here ; I mean to send some from England.

Krugs, or Krohgs, are roadside taverns. Inscriptions have just been put on them in Russian, by order of the Government, though the people understand nothing but Lettish or German !

A Jew bought this year's apple-crop in the meadows between the road and the river for Rs. 100. He, with his wife and two sons, has been camping out there for the past two weeks, to see that none are stolen. Berg said last night : " The Government ought to do something to save us. Prices are all so low that we shall be ruined if they continue. I don't fear America or Austria but I have seen samples of Indian wheat and we cannot possibly compete against grain such as that ! " Schouvaloff : " But what can the Government do ? " " Well, if necessary, conquer India and *ruin it !* " Yunkerdom is evidently not confined to neighbouring Prussia.

Of neighbouring places Bornemunde has been a feoff of the Schepping family since 1499. Jungfernhof, now in ruins, has graves of the Manteufels.¹

23rd August. To Maizoten, Princess Lieven's place. Queer lawn tennis, almost as funny as the croquet in ' Alice.' The ground marked out with tape and hairpins, over which we frequently tripped. A very active French tutor was evidently of opinion that the thing to do was to see how high you could send the ball without hitting it out of the ground. My partner was one of the daughters, in long riding habit, the end thrown over her arm, and ' top ' hat ! I could not help laughing and I'm afraid gave offence, the more so that there were many very solemn people about, dressed in black broadcloth with large white chokers, badly tied, some of them Dutch Evangelists. In Russia proper they would have been

¹ From the *Nóvoe Vrémya*, 25/7th August, 1915. " The owner of the estate *Kapseden*, Baron George Manteufel, gave a two-days' feast in honour of the German successes, which was attended by the whole of the German staff. The foresters of Baron Manteufel acted as guides to the Germans, dressed as Prussian officers. Not long ago this same Baron Manteufel was president of the requisitions commission (Russian) and he had been marshal of the Grobinsk nobility (*Kreismarchal*) since 1888."

arrested, but here, where all around are Lutherans, their proceedings are winked at or ignored. The Princess, like Countess Schouvaloff, who accompanied us, is an ardent follower of Lord Radstock.

These great ladies amused me considerably, though I took pains to conceal it. The "Radstock" type as I knew it in Russia was a delightful one for anybody with a grain of humour to contemplate—such complete self-confidence, such absolute belief that *they* were going to Heaven and all who differed from them to Hell! Such implicit assurance in the perfection of their own characters and the all-sufficient nature of their own faith and works. Calling in the beggar at the gate, yet (in some cases) making their servants' lives a burden to them; knitting woollen stockings for the poor and wearing the most expensive silk themselves; talking of self-denial and other Christian virtues with peculiar unction but refusing to visit a country-place *where there was no man-cook!* Very kind and friendly, withal, to me "a lost sheep," as Countess Schouvaloff called me, but a sheep who might yet be 'found'! I noticed particularly that the converts, especially the lady-converts, were all well past the frivolous age. To resume:

August 27th (having meantime transferred ourselves, some sixty miles, to Salven, also in Courland). With Schouvaloff, in the forest, or rather in a moss-bog with stunted fir trees sparsely set, swarming with elk-flies. These are most annoying creatures; they get into his hair and mine and more than once we have to undergo 'Murillo' searchings at the hands of experts.¹ In one ring an elk comes out and passes within two yards of me, at their peculiar loping trot. I take it to be a cow, there being no sign of antlers; but a thick long beard throws doubt upon the sex, though I am assured that cow-elk, like other unlucky ladies, occasionally grow this masculine appendage. In any case I refrain from shooting. Squirrels

¹ The elk-fly, I learn by the courtesy of the *Field*, is a bee-like bot-fly belonging to the genus *Cephenomyia*, of which other species infest the red deer, reindeer, fallow deer, and roe.

chase each other merrily. A large hawk or eagle soars high in air. Camberwell beauties and fritillaries float by. "*Der lieber Gott rauscht durch den Wald.*"

All reaping is finished but the barley and flax; the latter now ripe. The flax flowers and little blue butterflies are just of one colour. Children's eyes are sometimes the same—"Blue were her eyes as the fairy flax"; and by a queer coincidence the hair, then, is sure to be flaxen! Another case of our getting two colour similes or names from one plant is the mallow, whence, from the leaves—malachite (Greek *μαλάχη*); from the flower—mauve (latin, *malva*). Bilberries are nearly ripe now.

Combing my hair before going to bed I find more of these detestable "elk-flies," without wings, which are evidently mere temporary conveniences, as with ants, and break off at a touch. A keeper said to be 92 years of age was afoot all day, gun on shoulder, and at about 6 p.m. Schouváloff asked him, was he tired? offering to pay him in full if he liked to go home. He confessed that he had had about enough walking. He had served Prince Zúboff and his young wife, my friend's mother, in the days of Alexander I. and remembered the Napoleonic invasion.

Salven and Nefft, two adjoining estates, in the Oberland of Courland, belong to Paul Schouváloff, Peter having taken Ruhenthal, but retaining 6000 dessiatines of forest here, leaving 13,000 to Paul. The local poachers advance in line, killing whatever they come across, and I verily believe the beaters see more game than we do who only 'stand and wait.' Flecks of sunlight come slanting through the forest. White birches gleam; pines glow rusty red. Across open glades the roe-deer rush at a mad gallop.

When the dogs come out without having 'found' they give you a moment's emotion; you grip your gun, but soon realise that the game has gone back. Yesterday, in the second ring, I shot a buck and a doe right and left, both running in pretty thick stuff and both with No. 1 shot. Hark! There go the dogs—in a minute out comes a fox, and I commit vulpicide without a qualm. Soon after I hear a roe galloping out. It stops behind a tree; I cannot see the head to know whether buck or doe. Presently it starts again. I see sprouts on the forehead and kill it. In the next ring I get a hare—so far everything is mine.

Later I shot at two out of three woodcock with No. 1—and missed them!

To-day Count Paul and his son Pável Pávlovich arrived—the former from Berlin, the latter from St. Petersburg. I enquired eagerly after news. They said there was a great fuss going on about the escape, or escapade, of Eyoub Khan, but the relations between England and Russia were, none the less, excellent.¹ The Crown Prince's illness was more than ever serious. Bergmann was to make the operation, but dined two days before with Count Paul, who said to him, "out of friendship to you more even than to him—take my advice and don't! There are two or more doctors against operating; why risk it?" Bergmann agreed and Mackenzie was called in. But Bergmann now says that the wart or growth will come again very soon. Prince Wittgenstein, the rich one, is dead, in France, and all the Hohenlohes flock to see what each can get. "Bismarck," said Count Paul, "though the Russians these twenty years refuse to acknowledge or even recognise it, is a true friend to Russia, and does more for us than for any nation save his own."

Pável Pávlovich sniffs doubtfully.

Count Paul: "The [old] Grand-duke Michael is a good fellow (*bon diable*)—but the Tsar leaves all military matters to Vladímir"—"who knows as little as he does!" adds Pável Pávlovich.

Later. In a marsh with stunted firs, all thickly hung with long grisly lichen—such a growth I have never seen before—only the tops of the spruces, and here and there a branch-end, are green, all else matted and grey. The ground is covered with rank grass, near six-foot high, a fine place for elk, so they say—we shall see. It looks more fit to be the haunt of the *Lieshi* or the *Baba Yagá* (the wicked Wood-spirit and the Ogress).

The dogs were now loosed and soon gave tongue. I loaded with buck-shot in one barrel, a bullet in the other. Once the dogs came right up to me and expectation grew keen; but nothing came out. Later, the forester on my right called "wach-thier," then shouted "bock, bock." A fine buck came bounding past me at the maddest pace. I fired, but missed. He crossed the line diagonally and Pável Pávlovich, turning

¹ Eyoub who had been living as a refugee in Persia made an armed attempt on Afghanistan, which failed ignominiously.

round, shot him dead. Soon after he shot a large Ural owl and Count Paul a fawn. We got nothing more; but as Schouváloff and I drove home together two large bull-elk crossed the road near where, in the morning, I had let four does go past. They stopped and stood some 50 yards away, a tantalising shot; but the guns had gone on ahead of us in another trap. One was a very large bull with grand antlers. These elk were very dark, with white belly and legs. They are lighter in winter.

28th August. In the 1st ring, as the beaters came out, I tumbled a galloping hare heels over head with a bullet at a good 40 yards. In the next ring a doe passed me at 5 yards. Weather very hot and fine all these days.

Later. I've been sitting here for an hour—the dogs, so they say, having gone far away “on their own” in chase of some beast or other. The trees are young and small, with a tall pine here and there of the former generation, left for seeding. The station-master from Rumersdorf, named Gerstern, came last night for two days' shooting.

No elk came out, but three capercaillie; one to Count Peter who bagged it, and two to me. I shot one flying with No. 1 and missed the other with a bullet—mine was a grand old cock. Then we had lunch. Champagne of *cuvée réservée du Comte Pierre Schouváloff* from Prince Golítsin's estate in the Crimea. “Not much better than lemonade,” says Peter, “but fizz of a kind, and that's always something!” He had, indeed, a somewhat excessive liking for champagne.

That particular Prince Golítsin married one of Countess Schouváloff's daughters by her first husband, Count Orlóff-Denísoff. He devoted himself to viticulture in the Crimea, and with no little success. But wine is a queer product. You may plant the Madeira vine in Sicily and get Marsala. You may plant the finest vines of France and Germany in the Caucasus or on the Black Sea coast and produce very drinkable stuff indeed, but, so far, nothing to compare to the originals. In a certain vineyard shadowed at sunrise by Mt. Ararat—possibly the very spot where Noah was overcome with such dire results to the human race—I found once a grey-bearded Frenchman burning sulphur in the vats at vintage time.

I asked him why. He explained courteously that he was arresting fermentation half-way. The resulting liquid—it looked like dirty, soapy water—would then go by road to Akstafá, by rail to Batoum, and thence by ship to Odessa, where it would be made, with other ingredients, into Chateau Margaux, Clos Vougeot, Perrier Jouet, Liebfraumilch, “or anything else, *ma foi*,” that the market demanded! The entire yield of the vineyard had been bought at the rate of about 2d. per pood (36 lbs.) weight of grapes as it stood.

Prince Golítsin in the course of years had collected specimen dozens, half-dozens, or bottles of every good wine and vintage he could lay hands on; he had made in fact a museum, or rather a gallery; in which Madeira, 1811, took the place, say, of a Raphael Madonna, “comet” port of Titian’s mistress, old Tokay of a saint by Cimabue. His estate was situated close to Theodosia, the ancient Kaffa of many memories, and, as he himself told the story, he was returning home once from the Caucasus on the mail-steamer when he got into conversation with three fellow-travellers—a Welshman, a Scot, and a son of La Belle France. They were bound for Sevastopol and home, after an abortive hunting expedition, but the steamer was to stay two hours at Theodosia; and finding them pleasant company and evidently appreciative of good wine, Golítsin persuaded them to go ashore and dine with him, vowing that each one should have a bottle of whatever wine he loved best *and of the year he chose to name*. Pleased but incredulous they landed, and made their way to his house. He had sent a messenger on ahead the moment the ship cast anchor in the roads, and when his guests sat down to dinner, some half-hour later, the Welshman found before him, neatly basketed, his Romanée Conti, 1869; the Scot, his Margaux, *tirage* 1865; while to the Frenchman, who had chosen a Tokay of some early year in the nineteenth century, his princely host explained apologetically that he had none of it,

but offered him instead a precious little *flacon* of 1787!
To resume :

Count Paul, chaffing me, said that correspondents were much the same as ambassadors except that the latter were *quite* useless. He was then Russian ambassador, himself, at Berlin, so in a position to judge! Count Peter: "Yes, it's not democracy that kills them but the railway and the telegraph. Formerly it was necessary to have a clever man who could act, on occasion, without instructions from home. Now any clerk would do."

Count Paul: "Malet¹ is the only one in Berlin with whom one can pass the time agreeably. The Germans are a detestable race." Both brothers, being violently aristocratic, agree in abusing the Frenchmen now in office.

We came back to St. Petersburg on 1st September. Meantime Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, who had been elected to the throne of Bulgaria on 7th July, made a sudden appearance in that country on the 14th August, and took over the reins of Government at Tirnovo.

The situation thus created was one of the greatest embarrassment to the Russian Government, and once more threatened Europe with very grave danger. Schouvaloff believed that the usurper would be forced to retire by diplomatic pressure on the part of Russia and Germany, a belief shared in at the time by many good authorities; that otherwise Russia must take forcible measures, and that a European war might ensue. I obtained from Dumba and Hardinge what may be called the Anglo-Austrian view which on the face of it seemed more likely to be correct, and in the long run proved to be so. My friend was not always right, nor did I—as was sometimes said—rely entirely on his knowledge and judgment, though I did trust absolutely his good faith. In a notebook I find :

5th September. Hardinge and Dumba between them told me what follows : De Giers, coming straight from the Emperor

¹ Sir Edward Malet, G.C.B., etc., etc. (died 1908), was British Ambassador in Berlin from 1884 to 1895.

declares that his Imperial Majesty won't hear of Russian interference in Bulgaria. He has only one policy—letting them stew in their own juice, knowing very well that it would be the ruin of Russia if she incurred hostilities with the probable coalition against her. De Giers was never so strong as at present; he has it all his own way. Prince Ferdinand has a very good game to play if only he shews a moderate amount of common sense; and if there is any good in him this event—the execution of the “martyrs”—and the difficult position he is in will, of course, bring it out. Russia has persuaded the Porte to recommend General Ernroth—but beyond that the Turks will not go, knowing what can be done against them in Macedonia and Cyprus and also in Albania if Bulgaria is driven to it; though Coburg's¹ best policy, and the advice he gets from friendly powers, is not to threaten Turkey but to conciliate her by cheap congratulations “on the Sultan's or, better still, the chief eunuch's birthday,” etc. The Prince has succeeded in getting together a ministry, including the opposition; and the *Nóvoe Vrémya* attributes this last fact to Bismarck's friendly interference, in behalf of Russia. He must identify himself with the cause of the Bulgarian leaders and then they will have to stick to him. He may be a poor sort of ruler but he is at any rate better than none. Stoïloff, who is a very shrewd man and made a great impression at Hatfield, insisted very much upon the necessity and advantage of shewing that the Bulgarians, after all that has passed, could still get a Prince of a reigning European family to take the vacant throne.

The Bulgarians have expressed their full determination to resist by force the imposition on them of Ernroth or any other Russian; and as to Russia making any attempt towards occupation, Austria, Italy, and England are quite determined in that case to interfere, if only by sea, and have intimated as much to Roumania.² These Powers are more than ever bent upon thwarting Russia in any such attempt, Italy guided by Crispi being particularly forward. The Italians are ruled by demagogues and they want a sounding foreign policy—anything to advertise the fact that they really do form one of the Powers—this was the case under Cavour and has been ever

¹ It is 'Coburg' in my notes so I keep to it; but Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg is, of course, the correct name and title.

² For England's change of policy see pp. 390 and 395.

since. They don't really understand the question, however, and are by no means clever foreign politicians—witness their tomfoolery at Massowah. Bismarck is apparently playing the Russian game—Dumba thinks, to take the wind out of the French sails; Hardinge, because his great object is to prevent any solution of the Bulgarian question at all. "He probably tips the diplomatic wink to Coburg and helps him up with one leg while apparently pulling him down by the other." In fact, what he said of Battenberg ought to be enough to encourage his successor, *i.e.* that he was a d——d fool to leave Bulgaria, in spite of his (Bismarck's) expressed disapproval of his remaining there. The lesson is obvious and should not be lost on Coburg. As to the danger of a pro-Russian revolution in Bulgaria, the fate of the "martyrs" has given a warning to other such adventurous heroes, and they may well prefer squeezing money out of the Russian Government at St. Petersburg, or out of Khitrovó (Russian Minister) at Bucharest, to running their neck into the noose from which they know by experience Russia will move no finger to extricate them.

The Regents, both agreed, made a great stroke by the execution. Indeed, Coburg, has, or had, more to fear from the extreme Nationalist party, the Battenbergers, than from the Russians, who have no influence there at all. There was a split some months ago between the ministers and the Regents; Nicolaieff and the Battenbergers wanted to re-elect Prince Alexander, and let him appoint some one, probably Nicolaieff himself, to represent him for the time being; for he had promised to come back upon the occurrence of an event which might soon be expected *in the course of nature*—that is, the death of the Emperor William, knowing that he could count securely on the support of his successor the then Crown-prince Frederick. However, the Regents, the moderate party, gained the day and brought in Coburg, while the Russian party was so utterly discredited and disheartened that it actually voted for him!

Turkey, has, of course, had it pointed out to her that if she takes up the cudgels for Russia she will light a fire which can and will only be extinguished at her expense. The Bulgarians can send the fiery cross into Albania and Macedonia; and Serbia and Greece will ally themselves with Bulgaria lest they should lose by inaction their "rightful" inheritance.

So far Hardinge and Dumba.

There was very little news at this time, the Emperor being absent and de Giers, too, in Finland. Schouvaloff told me on the 10th September that he had seen Morier the day before, and learnt with surprise that Pobyedonóstseff had written to him that, though not at all sharing his views as to liberty of conscience, he had looked through the papers in Hilton's case and had come to the conclusion that there was nothing to justify his expulsion; therefore he might remain. This, certainly, was a triumph for Morier. Páshkoff had written such a letter to Tolstóy (Dmitri) as to compromise both himself and Hilton.¹ Schouvaloff said: "I know Tolstóy and he will not forgive Páshkoff that letter as long as he lives. Morier," he continued, "asked me whether I thought Bismarck sincere in his friendliness to Russia just now. I told him absolutely so. It is a sign of want of intelligence to be always suspecting deceit in others. Why should Bismarck be playing false? Look at his situation and you will see that he has every inducement to settle the question. He has engagements to Austria and Russia. If war breaks out he must side with one or the other; he cannot really remain neutral—impartial, that is. Well, what happens, what can he gain? He does not want Vienna; he has enough to do to maintain Germany in her present bounds. If he goes against Russia, France is at once on him. No; if he cannot prevent war he will observe a neutrality friendly to Russia, only stipulating that Austria shall not be crushed (*écrasée*). Austria, at present, is easily guided from Berlin, but should she obtain serious successes in war that would no longer be so. Bismarck's idea is to establish a boundary between the spheres of Austrian and Russian influence in the Balkans. He thinks that Austria would not be so very difficult to satisfy. She holds, indeed, that it is a necessity for her to include Serbia in her sphere. *He* asked me:

¹ Mr. Hilton was Col. Páshkoff's land-agent and like him an ardent follower of Lord Radstock.

Could not Russia agree to this? I told him I thought not, but I undertook to put it before the Emperor, who, when I did so, refused even to consider it. He thinks, on the contrary, that Russia ought to have a dominating influence there too (*i.e.* in Serbia); and that if she renounced it she would lose her hold on Montenegro as well. Moreover, in the event of any such division taking place, what Austria was given she would actually receive, whereas Russia, very possibly, would find herself no nearer to establishing her influence in Bulgaria than before.

"Russia will never be reconciled to Coburg—yet no preparations are being made for an occupation. You ask, 'Why this contradiction?' I reply that it is the national character—to go on hoping that something will turn up—in this case that the Bulgarians themselves will oust him."

In telegraphing this I added: "Giving Bulgaria over to Russia would be like giving a hedgehog to a dog."

On the 18th September I dined with the Moriers at Oranienbaum. He spoke to me for a whole hour after dinner, while the others played whist, and was very emphatic on the inevitability of war between France and Germany. This, he said, was the root idea in European politics, and whoever had not grasped it was simply at sea. At dinner he and Lady Morier had silently drunk wine together, and Macedo (the Portuguese minister), noticing it, had asked: "Is it some anniversary?" "Oh no, nothing at all (smiling)—merely between ourselves." Sir Robert now told me that he had been given the G.C.B., but had only heard it privately.¹ In regard to the Afghan question, he spoke of "Ridgeway's weakness," but, as a matter of fact, there was tension, not to say friction, between the two men. Morier had

¹ It was only on the 20th September that the official announcement was made in London. Sir (J.) West Ridgeway at the same time was made C.B.—both awards being for their services in connection with the Afghan Frontier Convention.

worked hard to get the negotiations more completely into his own hands, and had succeeded in obtaining the transfer of the Commission from the Afghan frontier to St. Petersburg. Sir West Ridgeway, naturally enough resented his lessened importance, and the Ambassador's masterful ways.

Sir Robert said that he had told M. de Giers, at Franzensbad, long ago, that he was coming here in the firm belief that English and Russian interests in Central Asia were identical, and that he would do anything in his power to promote a good understanding if met in the same spirit. De Giers had agreed, and ever since the two had worked together admirably. "When the Russians moved to Kharkhee and a rumour was heard of a further advance to Chamiab, I put my foot down and, though without instructions, I took it upon myself to declare that we regarded that place—until otherwise agreed—as Afghan territory, and should absolutely break off all negotiations if any such step were taken. This stopped them . . . 'India,' I said, 'is our bone and the best-tempered dog will growl and snap if you come too near his bone!' The settlement is a good one and the most reasonable that could be made *now*. Where we lost ground was at the time of the battle of the Kushk (Penjdeh). If you or I had been there, Mr. Baddeley, we should never have allowed it. Of course Lumsden should have taken his stand upon the territory in occupation of the Afghans, then or recently, and made it quite evident that to get it the Russians would have to fight, and beat, him and his escort, which would mean war with England. . . . Alikhánoff knew what he was about and would never have brought it on. Besides, our force—four hundred picked men and the Afghans to boot—would have been strong enough to thrust the Russians back. . . . Good God! what an opportunity it was!" and his blue eyes flashed, and his big, clever mouth worked, as it had a habit of doing

whenever he was stirred. "I suppose it was the Gladstone government that did it. Lumsden knew probably that they didn't mean really backing him up." "Yes, no doubt; but it was just one of those occasions when a man can take the initiative. However, I think Condie Stephen was also much to blame. He kept urging that they were to avoid fighting at all costs."¹

Morier took great credit to himself for having got the Commission transferred. "It was a great move. We were in a very awkward predicament. Had we stayed there another winter the Afghans would have driven us to seek Russian protection, a nice state of things!" It also suited his own book uncommonly well. No doubt Sir West Ridgeway will have something to say on this subject in his forthcoming *Memories*.

"Once having given in" he went on, "as we did after the Kushk affair, the ethnographical frontier—the Russian idea—was the only reasonable one.

"I said of Bismarck after the war with France: '*Il a fait de l'Allemagne une très grande nation mais de l'Allemand un bien petit monsieur*,' " which Schouváloff would improve to '*un animal*'!

¹ This categorically contradicts, as far as Condie Stephen is concerned, the statement of an anonymous authority quoted by Mme. de Nóvikoff, *The M.P. for Russia*, vol. ii. p. 212, but Stephen was, no doubt, merely fulfilling the instructions of the Foreign Office. In regard to Lumsden, see *ante*, pp. 212 note; 222 and note.

CHAPTER XV.

Finland—A sea full of islands, a land full of lakes—The Saima Sea—The river Vuoksa—Magpie Point—An angler's paradise—The baffled osprey—A devil-fish—A case of conscience—The luck of Italy—A record catch—Lady Morier's mistake—Diana in Finland—The gwynniad—Land-locked seals and salmon—Grayling—A small trout, a big pike—Sir Edward Goschen's feat—A likely place for pike—A handful of flowers—The water-level—Birch-trees and birch-bark—Mosquitoes and *sudak*-flies—A fishy mystery—Whisky-bobby—A delectable spot—Steeple-chasing extraordinary—My modest baskets—Záriëchë—Troubling the waters—The end of the Harraka club—"These impossible Englishmen"—Vaarpa Saari—Music on the waters—Slippery salmon.

See map at end of volume.

FINLAND is called sometimes the Land of a Thousand Lakes, or still more poetically, the "Last-born Daughter of the Sea," and both titles are true enough to nature. Sedimentary rocks are for the most part missing. The bare igneous granite starts up everywhere from land and water; and its surface, where visible, is smoothed and rounded by the friction of the glaciers, or split and crumbled by the agency of frost. The beginning and progress of vegetation are patent wherever you look. Here the rock lies bare; there it is covered with moss and with lichens; ferns come next, then flowering plants; stunted fir-trees start from clefts where an inch of mould has lodged, whole forests grow on a foot of soil. In the South and West where the land has risen in recent times its conformation is such that an elevation of a few feet only has made in places, and would or will make in

others, all the difference between a sea full of islands and a land full of lakes. The Saima is so thickly packed with innumerable islets, some of them, when seen through the shimmering haze of a summer's day or the mists of dawn, resembling to illusion ships in full sail, that one seldom sees an expanse of absolutely clear water larger than, say, Windermere. From Nyslott no less than seven hundred islands are visible at once.

Now, the Saima Lake is in itself eighty miles long, yet it is only the lower reservoir of a system 235 miles in length containing 120 large and a countless number of small lakes, pools and backwaters, covering in all an area of 64,000 square kilometers.¹ Of all this vast expanse the river Vuoksa is the only natural outlet, but the Vuoksa being unnavigable owing to falls and rapids, a canal has been constructed from Viborg to Lauritsala, near Willmanstrand, by which, with the help of twenty-eight locks, the rise of 256 feet from sea to lake is surmounted; and as the minimum depth in the waterway is $8\frac{3}{4}$ feet and the width $31\frac{1}{2}$ feet, vessels of considerable size can avail themselves of this means of communication, which was opened in 1856. The scenery of the Lake is, on the whole, monotonous—water, granite, and fir-trees; fir-trees, granite, and water, in endless alternation with neither elevation to give grandeur, nor variety sufficient to excite interest. Yet it is pretty and pleasing even by day, and at sundown or during the short summer night takes on at times a magical beauty. It is seen at its best, perhaps, when the fir-trees are black in the shadows, and their spear-like tops stand sharply out against the orange or crimson glow in the North and West—or, better still, the band of immaculate and infinitely delicate green that often divides them—while rock and tree and sky are so perfectly mirrored in the still waters that the difference in depth of colouring between original and reflection is barely perceptible.

¹ *Finland i 19de seklet.*

The lack of life is remarkable, almost oppressive. Even in August it is but rarely that a bright green patch on the slope of some island denotes a cultivated clearing, though on the mainland the fields of yellow autumn-sown rye, or barley and oats still green, are not infrequent; and near these will be the clusters of wooden houses and barns where the peasant-proprietors dwell. Villages are rarely seen for the Finns are not, like the Russians, gregarious, but love to dwell apart. A fisherman's hut may be sighted now and again on the shore, or the lonely fisher himself, in crazy boat, pulling round a headland, or at anchor, rod in hand, at some likely spot for perch, pike, or grayling. In summer, the osprey, most graceful of the birds of prey, is often seen circling and hovering high overhead, watching, keen-eyed, his finny victim. Long-necked divers swim boldly about in the open far away from land, while mallard, sheldrake, widgeon and teal dabble near the reedy inlets and creeks, followed by their fledged or unfledged brood. Seals are still found in the Saima, though there is no channel by which they could come up from the sea; and fish are caught now and then which some authorities declare to be salmon, though it is difficult to admit that they can have forced their way up the great Imatra rapid. Both, probably, are survivals from days long past, when other communication existed.

Harraka Niska (Magpie Point), where the Vuoksa starts on its troubled career, seems meant by nature to be the home of the trout and the paradise of anglers. Imagine a still, round pool 360 yards across and of great depth, the shore lined with granite boulders, backed by dark walls of spruce and pine, relieved here and there by the silver stem of a birch or the lighter foliage of that or other deciduous trees, such as alder, larch, aspen and mountain-ash. To the North stretches the great Lake, but the view, as usual, is soon shut in by tree-clad islands. The opening here is but a third less wide than the pool's

diameter, but the rounded contour is well indicated by jutting points on either side. To the South, between two wooded knolls some eighty yards apart, on the higher of which stands or stood the Club-house, the water rushes down with arrowy speed. The descent begins in one unbroken wave from side to side; in the middle smooth water stretches down in a long V-shaped tongue of gentle undulation for a hundred yards or more, but on either hand the eddies wax wider and wilder, until the whole river breaks into a mass of surging, seething waves, tossing the white foam high in air. A little lower the tumult subsides for a while into a pool of dancing water, full of trout up to three and more pounds in weight, to be renewed with ten-fold force where the banks draw together again half a mile below. The Race of Imatra lies five miles further down, where for a thousand yards the river forces its way through the narrow cleft it has worn in the solid granite, with the rush and roar of a whirlwind through the forest.¹

In 1887 I went up to Harraka, alone, on Monday the 31st August (12th September) and spent three delightful days there—the last of the season—more than ever enchanted with the place.

The fishing was bad, but the weather splendid—such days, such nights! so marvellous the purity, so great the variety, of colour in sky and on water!

The deciduous trees were already on the turn; birch and alder yellowing; aspens "some very red and some a glad light green." An osprey fished the pool daily and seemed to find it uncommonly hard work. I watched him more than once for two hours at a stretch. He

¹ Dr. J. C. Brown (*The Forest Lands of Finland*, 1883, p. 21) states that "through this narrow channel 67 millions of cubic feet of water force their way every hour. Within the same space of time the Niagara Falls pour about 42 millions of cubic feet of water into the basin below," or less than two-thirds of the quantity, a statement no one who had seen both places could possibly credit. According to the *Encycl. Brit.*, the flow of water at Niagara varies from well over 600 to nearly 800 millions of cubic feet per hour!

would often swoop low, evidently at sight of a fish, but his prey was ever too quick for him. He recovered himself each time with an effort and renewed his circlings, to be baffled again and again, and this though the pool swarmed with trout and I could see them jumping and playing on the surface of the water, showing here a head, there a tail; in one place a dorsal fin only, in another the whole vast, shining broadside of a fifteen or twenty-pounder! Such, of course, the bird well knew were not for him, and when he did get one of suitable weight it was with a swoop not a stoop—nothing like what one reads of in Natural Histories—the stone-like plunge, the *unerring* aim, that would, if true, leave the osprey no reasonable incentive to indulgence in healthy exercise!¹ The second day he sat on Astashóff's paling and watched me, for an hour or so; with envious eyes, no doubt, for it happened that I landed two good fish meantime. And, by the way, when the trout are at play they are seldom to be caught by bait of any kind.

At Schlüsselburg, once, there was grave debate amongst the peasants and workmen over a "devil-fish" that had been found dead on the lake-shore. It was in reality a big pike with the claws and tarsi of an osprey, or perhaps, even, a white-tailed eagle, fast in its back. The bird had evidently been drowned after striking a fish too heavy to lift, and the body had rotted away. The pike, we may suppose, died of mortification—in one or both senses of the word!²

The catching of these big lake and river trout, by trolling, demanded but a modicum of skill and literally no knowledge or experience. Clumsy people might go on

¹ I do not mean to imply that the osprey never plunges. He does. I have seen him do it, and carry off good fish, too.

² An identical story is, I find, more amusingly told in that rare and vivacious little book, *The Present State of Russia*, London, 1671, p. 38. The author's name is not given, but he is said to have been Dr. Samuel Collins, of whom there is an account in Granger's *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. iv. p. 22, 8vo edn.

losing them for years ; but anybody with a little " touch " and " temper " got into the way of it very quickly. I remember taking my brother¹ up to Harraka in 1884. He was then a novice ; but he paid great attention to my instructions and caught *lohi* after *lohi*² from the first. At the same time, to show what luck will do, a certain Minor Canon, an excellent fisherman, trolled day and night for a week and never got a fish above five pounds. It was really exasperating. We were a large and merry party, but the Minor Canon's non-success nearly cast a gloom over us towards the end. He was so desperately keen, and so unlucky. When Saturday night came he arranged that one of us should ring a bell five minutes before midnight lest he should unwittingly break the Sabbath day. He trolled on and on and at the first stroke of twelve stepped ashore fishless, and sorrowful, but with conscience at rest. On Sunday night the position was reversed. His rod was made ready for him, sandwiches and a flask thoughtfully provided, his boatman was in waiting. As the clock began striking the midnight hour he stepped into the boat and as the last stroke sounded gave the word to shove off ! We were all to leave next morning ; he fished to the last possible moment and landed—himself ! However, he had shown his skill as a fisherman, catching good baskets of trout and grayling in the dancing waters below the pool—better sport by far than trolling. I hope he had forgiven my brother long before he got home—being a Canon, though a Minor one, I think he must have !

Another case was that of an Italian military attaché, a smart young cavalry officer with enormous moustachios—he might almost have angled with them over the boat's side ! Now, this gallant *capitano* had literally

¹ W. St. Clair Baddeley.

² *Lohi* was a local word for any trout over 5 lb., said, very doubtfully, to be derived from the English " luck." More probably, E.D. thinks, from the Swedish *lax*, " salmon."

never touched a rod before—anything, that is, beyond the primitive “stick, string and bent pin” variety, in the Arno or may be, the Serchio.

We took him up to Finland and the same night—or perhaps the next day—he caught a 22 lb. trout, the next biggest but one to the 24 pounder that to this day constitutes the Club’s record!

A final instance. “Eddie” Thornton (the Ambassador’s son) who could not only fish but tie his own flies, whip a broken joint, make “collars” and “casts”—who was in short a fairly “compleat angler”—went up to Harraka in 1884 with Whitehead, then frankly a novice. In three days and nights they had made the record haul of 339 lbs. weight of trout over 5 lbs., besides countless smaller ones. Whitehead, of course, lost a good many, but still his catch was enormous.¹

In early days the club was run rather loosely. Arriving at Harraka one evening with another member we found there two strangers of whom one turned out to be Clutterbuck, the witty joint-author of *Three in Norway*.² He greeted us, or rather our hampers, with enthusiasm, but on finding that a certain turkey had been boned cried, “Dash it, what a do!” I enquired politely how long he had been there. The answer was “Three weeks and I’m going to stay three more.” He had been sent on from Norway, by Tom Michell, with unlimited leave to fish. This led to a change in the club rules.

But Clutterbuck was an admirable fisherman and a good sportsman. He would catch his one big fish each

¹ The late Sir H. W. Seton Karr in his book, *Ten Years’ Wild Sports in Foreign Lands* (1889), pp. 210-223, gives extracts from the Harraka Club books from which I take the following totals of trout above 5 lbs. weight, viz.: 1880, our best year by far, 300 fish averaging nearly 13 lb.; 1882, 124 fish averaging 10½ lb.; 1883, 27 fish weighing 277½ lb.; 1884, 82 fish weighing 1081 lb.; 1885, 40 fish weighing 471 lb.; and 1886, 49 fish weighing 547 lb., or an average weight for 622 fish of a little over 12 lbs.

² London, 1882.

day, and, that done, devote himself to fly-fishing along the banks or in the lower pools.

The Moriers derived great pleasure from their frequent visits to Harraka. They were both of very ample proportions, and seated (one only, of course) in one of our little boats brought the stern very low in the water. But Lady Morier went down the "rush" or first rapid out of the Lake on one occasion when a big fish plunged down it—as I did several times, with and without fish—not "turning a hair," though only one of our boatmen would venture it. She immortalised herself by a very natural mistake. At times the perch became a perfect nuisance; they were big and good to eat, especially fried or baked with soured cream (*smetána*), but one did not want them to keep taking bait meant for their betters. Her ladyship heard more than once on such occasions her fisherman mutter the word *pérkalž*. Naturally, she thought it the Finnish for "perch." So, each time that she caught one of the striped, spiky-finned undesirables she looked at the man and, shaking her head, said in strong disapproval, *pérkalž*, which he repeated grinning and nodding. It was only later, when innocently telling her story, that one of us had to break to her that *pérkalž* in Finnish meant *the Devil*!

Below the great Rapid of Imatra is the Fall of Valinkoski up to which and no farther come the degenerate race of salmon who have learnt to take Lake Ládoga for the sea and never reach a weight of more than 15 or 16 lbs. in consequence; whereas their noble congeners who come up the Neva yearly from the Baltic, and doubtless from far beyond, to make the Russian rivers on the east side of the lake their spawning grounds, run to 40 lbs. and more. They are as fresh, too, and tasty as any fish in the world, or nearly so.

I once took up to Harraka an erratic couple, the Turner-Turners. Their sporting adventures during three years of solitary life in British Columbia are public

property,¹ and such a Diana, I venture to think, has not often been seen in Finland. At Valinkoski we had quite good sport—for the place—catching several fish each, up to 15 lbs. but it must have seemed tame to them.

Occasionally we caught a *sig*, which I believe I was the first to identify with the Welsh *gwynniad* though more than one friend has imparted the information to me since, with much complacency, as his own discovery. With these a "ghost-moth," a white fly with a red tag, was sometimes effective. Smoked *sig*, deep gold-brown in colour, is one of the best known and best of Russian delicacies. Another rare fish to catch was the pike-perch (*Soudák*) which runs to many pounds, and seems to take bait by accident only, though one of the commonest fishes in Russia. It is also one of the best to eat.²

The question of salmon occurring above Imatra has always been a vexed one. I and others know that we have caught there fish indistinguishable to our eyes from salmon, though rarely; but that they get up the long "race" I, for one, refuse to believe; while that they make their way up the series of lakes and locks on the Saima-canal system is almost equally incredible. There are land-locked seals in the Saima—why not land-locked salmon—really land-locked, not mere degenerates such as those of the Lower Vuoksa?

Grayling afford pretty fishing at times, for very brief periods. Indeed, it is only for *three days*, in mid-June, that, on the Vuoksa, there is, each year, a certainty of catching grayling in large numbers with the fly. Then you may put fish after fish of from $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and even more, in your basket, as the result of flickering

¹ *Three Years' Hunting and Trapping in America and the North-West*, 1888.

² The late Sir Henry Dering, then first secretary of Embassy, caught one of 7 lbs. weight at Harraka when fishing with me on 9th June, 1887.

small brown or black flies or grey speckled ones on the bright smooth surface of the river, even without a ripple.

One more fish I will mention. Caught in more or less muddy home waters the pike is a poor sort of fish to eat, except in the pages of Izaak Walton, and pike-fishing—it's only a personal opinion, please!—a poor form of sport.

But in the crystal-clear and mighty waters of the Neva at Schüsselberg, or the Vuoksa almost anywhere in its course, the pike, at the right time of year, is as clean-tasting a fish as any spawned, and, well-cooked, is even a treat after a week or ten days' surfeit of trout, boiled, roasted and fried, though I will not go so far as the Little Russians, with whom a dish of pike is no less requisite in a Christmas bill-of-fare than turkey or plum-pudding with us. There is always, too, the attraction of size—every Finnish lake and river has its legend of monstrous pike—"as big as a boat" men sometimes declare, though no one has ever seen more than the creature's head or back—a sea-serpent story in fact.

I had one interesting experience with a pike on the river below Harraka. I had just hooked a trout on a fly-minnow in very strong, troubled waters in the lowest pool, to be drawn out of which into the final rapid meant certain death. I knew it was a one-pounder or thereabouts, but almost immediately the rod bent double and the boatman said "*lohi*." "*Ei ole lohi* (It's not a *lohi*)."
"*Ni, ni* (Yes, yes); *lohi on* (it is a *lohi*)."
"*Ei!* (No!)."
Had I been fishing with a blue-phantom I should have guessed that, as happened once before in the same pool, the fish, finding himself caught, had in his first desperate contortion managed to hook his tail in the lowest triangle, making thus a figure resembling somewhat that of the familiar bread-crumbed whiting, and offering, of course, a powerful resistance to the running water. As it was I could only think of a water-logged bough. Very cautiously I began to reel in, as we rowed slant-wise to shore. We reached the rocks,

the man sprang out and pulled the boat's head high up. I rose, still reeling in gently ; then saw what it was. Fast fixed on my 1 lb. trout were the jaws of a big pike—a 15 lb. fish we thought it. The man got his gaff ready ; I drew both fish within reach ; but when he lunged the pike let go and disappeared. I then landed the trout, scored right across back and belly by the pike's teeth, and that evening cooked and ate it, spitefully.

I was asked afterwards why I did not let the pike swallow its prey and thus hook and catch it ? The answer is that I was fishing with single gut ; yet the following story shows that I might, by bare possibility, have succeeded.

When the club lost the Harraka fishing and removed lower down to Vaarpa Saari, Sir Edward, then Mr., Goschen, First Secretary in the St. Petersburg Embassy, was out there one day, his son "Teddy" acting as boatman. The trout were not taking, but presently, as not infrequently happened about half a mile above the island, Goschen caught his minnow on a rock—or thought he did. "I'm on a rock, Teddy ; row round." The river there was very broad, the current not too swift, the rocks clean. One could get off, generally, by rowing round, keeping the line taut meanwhile, but it was not an easy job. "Teddy" rowed and rowed, the rod bent double, but the hook remained fast, the line held. Suddenly he cried "It's not a rock ; it's a fish." "Nonsense !" "But we are in quite another place !" "By Jove, so we are !" At that very moment the line sagged and, close to the boat, up swirled a monstrous head ! One can imagine the excitement of father and son ! Sir Edward exerted all his skill to keep the line taut knowing that he had *only thin single gut* wherewith to catch the biggest fish he had yet struck in Finland, and a pike to boot ! By good luck the hook had stuck just inside the very corner of the creature's mouth so that the gut came out free from the sawing teeth, and, after a long,

long struggle, Sir Edward brought the victim within reach, "Teddy" gaffed it, and the two together drew "out leviathan with an hook," or, in other words, lugged into the boat a pike that turned the scales at 29 lbs!

The monster was duly stuffed and presented to the Club which it still adorns, or did until Bolshevik times; but the stuffing was so badly done that it looked more like an eel, or a sea-serpent, or even a draught-excluder, than a fish of any sort. Still, the size was the thing, and the single gut and minnow that caught it were put inside the case in perpetual evidence of a truly remarkable feat.

Tired of trout-fishing, one summer's day, I took a pike-rod in hand, with gaff, net and suitable bait, and made my way by the woodland path, alongside the Vuoksas but high above it, to where, a mile or more down-stream, a sluggish river flowed in from the left. As far as appearances went it was a likely place for pike. I had noted it as such more than once when driving up from Imatra, and imagination soon pictured the capture there, after a long and arduous struggle, of some monster such as the fisher-folk loved to tell of. The walk itself was a delight, through the ruddy columns of the pines and silver shafts of the birches; the ground chequered with light and shade, and deep set with ferns, flowers and the dark, glossy leaves of berry-bearing shrubs; while the granite boulders were enriched with soft bright mosses, grey lichens, and here and there in crevice and cranny, with little self-sown beds of wood-sorrel, that plant whose delicate triple leaves are said to have furnished St. Patrick with a convincing illustration of the Triune God. Through the tree-trunks the river sparkled and flashed or, at the lower fall, showed white from bank to bank; nor, to my accustomed ears, did the roar of it make harsh or discordant music. Turning leftward and crossing the high road I aimed at a point a mile or so up

my "likely" stream and soon found myself plunging through a wood with boggy soil and tufted undergrowths, interspaced by pools of stagnant water, to emerge on a strip of open marsh-land bordering the river. The day had grown hot and the treacherous, hummocky soil made progress slow and painful. Mosquitoes, of course, swarmed. Now and again one leg or other would sink above the knee to be withdrawn with an unpleasant squelch; my high Finnish boots were soon full of mud and water; perspiration streamed down face and back. However, there were places along the bank firm enough to spin from, and for some hours I did my best though neither pike nor any other fish came to the lure. I grew disgusted, put up my rod and started homeward, to find quite other reward for my exertions than the imagined fish; for, soon, I had gathered both butter-wort and bladder-wort, bog-bean, *andromeda*, cranberry and other marshland plants. To these, in the woods wet and dry, I added, amongst others, such treasures as a large pink-flowering daphne, *pyrola media* and *pyrola uniflora*, the latter scented like lily-of-the-valley, the lowly red-flowered arctic raspberry, the cloudberry, and the precious flower of great Linnaeus, with creeping stem and fragrant, pendulous flowers in pairs of faintest blue and rose.¹ The large white blossom of the *ranunculus glacialis*, which here as in the Alps thrusts itself up through the melting snow, was, of course, long since gone, only the leaves remaining.

As a rule, in Finland, as in all Northern Russia, what flowers do exist are there in profusion, vivid in colour and rank in growth; and this, one may suppose, on account of the long sunny days incident to such high latitudes, but also of the abundant moisture which there

¹ The last three are *Rubus arcticus*, in Russian *mamura*, the fruit of which makes a delicious jam; *Rubus chamaemorus*, in Russian *maroshka*, with pale yellow berries, sweet but somewhat mawkish; and *Linnaea borealis*, precious because he chose it to bear his name. The books say only "flesh-coloured, but I follow my notes."

never fails. Driving up to Harraka through the night, as we usually did, it was strange to see under a cloudless sky the mists rising towards dawn—when the temperature even in July neared freezing point—from marsh, meadow and the smaller lakes and pools, and spreading horizontally in ghostly wisps and layers till all the low land was covered; but much more so to watch the vast cloud-masses and Exodus-pillars that surged and towered, up and ever up as if from some giant's cauldron, out of the mighty expanse of the Saima Sea. Often in this way the whole sky became overcast in the course of an hour or two, to clear again in as many more under the rays of the steeply mounting sun. The atmosphere, indeed, with its magical sunsets and gorgeous after-glows feasted our eyes perpetually; but one phenomenon puzzled us greatly. The water-level in the Vuoksa would vary from year to year to the extent of—in one case at least—not less than six feet; yet as far as we could see, this variation bore no relation whatever to the sum total of the winter's snow-fall. The alternative explanation seemed to be some unknown difference in the process of evaporation. Perhaps, by now, some scientist has explained it. The high level, it was said, occurred every seven years.

I mentioned birch-trees amongst others, but they deserve more than a passing word. In the North the immaculate purity of their bark far exceeds anything of the kind I have seen in England or even in Scotland, though in shape and size individual trees might well be matched there. Both bark and wood are used in an infinity of ways. Birch-logs make the brightest fires; birch-bark the best of kindling. The wood is made into carts, sledges, snow-shoes (not often), besides a hundred other things, while the bark is more precious still, so much so, indeed, that without the birch one can hardly imagine settled life in Finland, in former times at least, while to describe all the uses to which it is put would entail

the filling of many pages.¹ Even the severance of the bark from the living tree, in itself a desecration, gives rise to a strange and singular beauty, for, where it is stripped in rings from the trunk, the wood beneath shows at first a most delicate green; then changes, with exposure to the air and growth of fresh bark, through faintest rose-madder to crimson-lake, which darkens in turn and hardens slowly to a crust of black. Before this penultimate stage is reached, however, the white already shows through, in places, and in the course of time re-asserts its sway; though its pristine purity is never renewed. In speaking of the birch I use the term "white" for, in truth, the tinge of colour in the untouched bark—pearl-grey inclining to pink—is so slight that in summer even "silver" seems inadequate to express its tenuity. But when snow is on the ground, and clings in masses to spruce and to pine, the birch stems are seen by comparison to be warmly though most delicately coloured, as, with a difference, are the whitest of human skins, *pace* the poets, who persist in miscalling them "snowy."

Pleasant to eye and ear was the great open boat, like the tar-boats of the Uleá river further north, in which our peasants fared to church and back each Sunday; for the women and girls wore their best-broidered aprons, kirtles of many hues, and, on their heads, clean kerchiefs white or coloured. Both sexes worked at the oars, singing the while their hymns of praise to God, and reminding me, inevitably, of the emigrants in Marvell's poem:

"Thus sung they in the English boat
An holy and a cheerful note;
And all the way, to guide their chime,
With falling oars they kept the time."

¹ See for Scotland, *British Phaenogamous Botany*, by W. Baxter, vol. v. 1840, No. 326; for Courland and other northern countries, J. G. Kohl, *Die Deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen*, 1841, 2er. Theil, p. 71 sq.; and, generally, *Encycl. Brit.* under "Birch."

On the open waters of river and lake in Finland one is little troubled by mosquitoes, but along the banks and in the forest they are bad enough, though not so bad as in many other places. At times they gather in columns and hang waving over the river-side willows and alders, looking like so many pillars of smoke. The *sudák* flies, a large brown species, not, I think, *ephemeridae*, come out at times in countless millions. They penetrate each room, drown in jug or tankard, put out the candles, blot your letters, creep up your sleeves and down your collar, fill mouth and eyes unless tight shut, and, generally speaking, make themselves a complete and perfect nuisance; moreover, the trout become so gorged with them that they will take no bait for days at a time. When evening falls it is pretty and somewhat consoling to see the night-jars swooping and flitting open-mouthed, revelling in their yearly feast.

But the one drawback to our happiness at Harraka was that the big trout would not take the fly, for the occasions when they did so were so rare as to be obviously accidental. Why this should be so is one of the many "fishy" mysteries left for future science to solve.¹ Even more remarkable is the fact that in the lower courses of the southern and western rivers of Finland no salmon takes either fly, minnow, or any other bait, whereas in their upper reaches not only the blue phantom but the "Jock Scot," the "Butcher," the "Silver Doctor" and other lures are snatched as freely as in Norway or Scotland, and it is more or less the same with the Neva. At its mouths—of which there are five—where thousands of splendid fish are taken in the nets, first-class fishermen have tried the fly, and many another bait, in vain.² Yet

¹ I hear with pleasure that my old friend James Whishaw has "taught" the big *sig* at Vaarpa Saari to take the fly like a gentleman—the dry fly, that is. They run to five and six pounds weight.

² One such exasperated angler is said to have hooked a freshly netted salmon to a Jock Scott, thrown it back into the water, played it—and lost it!

at Schlüsselburg, where the river, leaving Lake Ládoga, begins its short career of forty miles or so, these same salmon take, though not very freely, flies of various descriptions, including a native one made by sewing a bit of squirrel-skin round the shank of a hook and tying three horsehairs across for hackles.

The only compensation was that as years went by we found that at certain times—or more properly at uncertain times—these same recalcitrants—the big trout, I mean, not the salmon—would take a so-called fly-minnow, jerked along the surface of the water. It was not quite fly-fishing, but the nearest thing to it. You at least followed your bait and saw your “rise.” The local name for the fly-minnow, evolved between English sportsman and Finnish fisherman, was *whisky-bobby*, a delightfully absurd combination, if I mistake not, of the Swedish *viska* to sweep, switch, *whisk* (our derivation from it with wrongly interposed “h”) and English “bob,” in reference to the jerky motion. The most efficient whisky-bobby was made by the local fishermen with a salted dace, or some such small fry, on a “flight” of English hooks. The fly-minnows of commerce were made of all sorts of material and of the most fanciful shapes and colours. Of these the simplest was, in my experience, the best—a small blue-backed indiarubber fly-minnow, with one strong hook in the middle of its back. Of minnows the blue phantom was by far the most killing, on the whole, though I have known the brown Totness run it close.

My basket at Harraka this time (September 1887) was not much below my usual modest mark—two *lohi* (16½ and 14½ lbs.) and about a dozen small trout weighing, together, perhaps as many pounds. Strange to say, never, in the first seven years that I fished at Harraka, did I catch a fish above 16½ lbs. or more than three *lohi* in a day, but then I never cared to troll all the time as many did, or to fish at all during more than very few hours each day.

The take of the club this season was 95 *lohi*, weighing 1,070 lbs. besides c. 900 small trout weighing 600 lbs.—nearly double the catch of 1886.

Far up the eastern waters of the great Saima Lake is the town of Joensuu and ten or twelve miles from it through the forest there exists a delectable spot known as P * * * Koski.¹ Here a little river—accidentally made—joins one of the smaller lakes to the mighty Saima.²

The distance between them is no more than three miles but the difference of level is considerable, so that the water leaving the upper lake flows first, a couple of hundred yards or so, as a rushing rapid, then opens out into a biggish pool, over which is or was situated the primitive log-house of the "Club," or rather of the two or three Englishmen and the one Finlander who shared the fishing. Below the house the river is, for a very short way, an alternate succession of falls and pools; then it runs smoothly and uninterruptedly past a rounded, bare, red-granite bluff to empty its waters into the lake. From start to finish the river runs through a chaos of rocks and boulders amongst which thin birch and fir-trees stand up wherever they find room.

There is no question of boating. You can throw a fly right across the river in the narrower parts; you can reach any spot in it from one bank or other, and there is a boat to put you across the house-pool. Now, in the first, straight, rapid there is one big boulder under water and just below it will lurk one fish. In the still house-pool there may be two or three fish, possibly more. In each of the four or five remaining pools, of more or less broken water, there may be one fish—that is all. I am not talking of small fry. These fish run from 5 lbs. to

¹ *Koski* in Finnish means "rapids" or "falls."

² Work was in progress on a canal when the waters of the Höytäinen lake burst through with a force that sent a wave four feet high through the narrows at Nyslott, sixty miles away, as the crow flies!

15 lbs.—it is quite remarkable how often they scale 12 lbs. or thereabouts—they are not the silvery lake-trout, but a variety of real gold-bellied river-trout, fine fighting fellows; *and they take the fly!* a greenish grilse-fly for preference.

From my diary under date August 10th and 11th, 1903, I take the following: "My catch, four trout of 6, 14, 11 and 16 lbs. weight, all on the same fly, and I ended by losing a bigger one (of course!), the eye of the (bronze) hook breaking when the fish was just about ready for gaffing. E. D. also landed four big ones."

These fish when hooked invariably make off downstream—follow you must, helter-skelter, over and among the granite boulders, heedless of cuts and bruises; but if anything in the world can make you indifferent to knocks it is to hear your reel whirring madly as you run, and see your 10- or 15-pounder leap clean out of water over each miniature fall, literally steeple-chasing downstream to reach the fancied security of the deep, dark waters he knows of below. Of course you check him in each pool and land him in one of them if you can, or in the bit of river beyond the last of them—unless you lose him, which the best of anglers may do in such conditions. A few hours later you may find exactly similar fish in precisely the same spots, or you may find none for days and days to come. Small trout—in Finland anything below 5 lbs. is "small"—grayling and, occasionally, *sig* give good sport in between. Here again is a mystery. Why should these big river-trout in a three mile, artificial river take the fly readily when none of them ever do so in the lakes above and below or in the whole course of the mighty Vuoksa? Of a truth the ways of fish like those of Providence are inscrutable.

Another delectable place was Záriěchě (*Beyond the river*) a few miles west of Siverskaya station on the St. Petersburg-Berlin line, where an English fishing and shooting Club occupied a loghouse beside a dammed-up mill-

stream in the forest. Here was very pretty trout fishing, and game from jack-snipe to bears. One basket I remember—three evenings' catch and not an exceptional one—was 40 fish weighing 80 lbs., after throwing back all under one pound. My friend John Hubbard—and his wife—caught most of them, mainly owing to superior skill,—one had to throw a long line deftly—but partly, I hope, because I had left my fly-book in the train and also had too heavy a rod. One of Hubbard's fish was a very old trout weighing over 6 lbs., the ugliest specimen of its race I have ever seen; in colour a tench—and sick at that—with hardly a spot. I found there the "impatient" balsam and, for the first time, the rare lady's slipper. The mosquitoes at Záříčchě were so numerous and so vicious that fishing was impossible without protection for face, neck and hands, which we provided in the shape of "crinoline" head-nets and gauntletted leather gloves.¹

Somewhat later (1892) occurred an incident, ridiculous in its origin, that threatened for a time to disturb the good relations Sir Robert Morier was at such pains to establish between himself and the highest circles in Russian society. Indeed, the consequences might well have been even more serious. The facts were as follows:—

One of the Naríshkins, a keen sportsman but by no means a popular one, wished very much to join the Harraka Fishing Club. The members, who were all English except General Astashóff, had very good reason, or thought they had, for deciding on no account to let Naríshkin in. Sir Robert Morier, on the other hand, had been elected an honorary member the moment it became known that such was his desire; and he, wishing to ingratiate himself with Naríshkin, but as a new-comer, quite misunderstanding the situation, told him "of

¹ Záříčchě was soon afterwards bought by the Emperor, who had been taught fishing, amongst other things, by Heath, his English tutor, an agreeable person and most excellent fly-fisherman.

course you must join the Club ; I have only to mention it as my wish, etc." When this well-meant interference met with a polite but firm rebuff Naríshkin was furious and swore to be revenged.¹

Now, it was the custom to elect all members of the British Embassy to the Yacht Club in return for the similar courtesy extended to Russian diplomatists in London, where the doors of the Marlborough, the Travelers' and the St. James', were open to them without ballot. Naríshkin, to wreak the wrong inflicted on him by a few English merchants, not one of whom, of course, would be deemed fit to wipe his feet on the door-mat of the ultra-aristocratic Yacht Club, took the opportunity of the arrival of a new British secretary of Embassy² to have him black-balled at that exclusive establishment. It was now Sir Robert's turn to be furious ; he threatened to ask the Prince of Wales to have the Russian Ambassador turned out of the Marlborough, and when a new Military Attaché, Colonel Gerard,³ arrived he forbade him to put down his name for the Yacht Club, and took care to let the fact be widely known. This vigorous measure soon had the desired effect.

Colonel Gerard, who had commanded the Guides and was well known as a shikaree, had been selected to attend the Tsarévich, afterwards Nicholas II, during his tour in India and had been fortunate enough to win his regard. To this circumstance, indeed, his appointment to Russia was largely due. He was warmly greeted at Court on being presented by his new chief,⁴ but presently astonished

¹ The Naríshkins have always given themselves airs since one of the family became Alexei Mikhailovich's second wife and mother of Peter the Great. The Naríshkin above-mentioned was the middle one of three brothers known as good, bad, and indifferent.

² Now Sir Henry Howard, late Ambassador to the Vatican.

³ Afterwards Sir Montagu Gerard. He died at Irkutsk, in Siberia, of pneumonia, while acting as first Military Attaché to the Russian army, during the Russo-Japanese war (26th July, 1905).

⁴ Just before the presentation Sir Robert turned to Howard whispering impatiently, " What the devil is the man's name ? "

the Heir-to-the-throne by saying, in reply to a graciously expressed hope that they would soon meet again at the Yacht Club, "I regret, Sir, that my ambassador will not allow me to put my name down for election." Then the "fat was in the fire" as Sir Robert had meant it to be! Narishkin was reprimanded severely, and orders were given to elect both Howard, the black-balled Secretary, and Gerard at once and unanimously. Needless to say, Narishkin, though he had succeeded in troubling our waters, caught never a fish therein!

The end of Harraka as an English club was a sad one. The original members, six in number, were the Michell brothers—Tom, Jack and Bob—Murphy, an Irish-American dentist, so handsome and charming a man that the Empress and grand-duchesses whose teeth he pulled out all loved him; Henry Anderson, a local banker; and Edward Gibson, the last-named being afterwards replaced by General Astashóff. These six allowed nine more to join them as ordinary members with no right of interference in the management of the Club, which they jealously guarded. In the early eighties Evelyn Hubbard, myself, and one or two more urged very strongly the purchase of certain peasant-land hitherto held in common which was about to be divided and must naturally carry with it the fishing rights in the famous lake-pool, offering to put down the capital sum required. One of the original English members, who shall be nameless, had at this time, owing to the absence or carelessness of the rest, practically full control of the Club, and he disliked so much the idea of losing, as of course he would have done, this autocratic power that our proposal was vetoed, though repeatedly urged not only from the point of view of sport but as a most excellent business investment. The result was that one day we learned that our solitary Russian member, Astashóff, had stepped in and bought land and rights behind our backs! He, at first, explained that the club would "of course" go on as before. He

had really acted in our best interests. Meantime he started building a villa on the eastern edge of the pool, and my heart sank within me. Next year he limited us to two boats; the third year he notified the club that fishing would be permitted only on personal application to him each time! He was good enough to make an exception in my case, on account, partly, of my relations with Schouvaloff, whom he could ill afford to offend, but also, I believe from personal regard. He insisted, even, one day when I had a big fish hooked, on my stepping out on to the smooth, low concrete quay he had laid down in place of our beloved rocks, jagged and slippery; then, forcing me down into an arm-chair, sent a servant for vodka and sandwiches, and said: "There, Iván Ivánovich, now isn't that the way to play a *lohi*?" When, having landed my fish, I expressed a decided preference for the old conditions, he turned his eyes sky-wards, shrugged his shoulders and exclaimed: "Oh, these impossible Englishmen!"

The Club-house and the fishing below the pool belonged to a Finnish landed-proprietor, Siliácus, who never worried us. But he sold it one day to Notbeck of the Tammerfors Cotton and Print Mills, and he, too, began to think there might be something agreeable, after all, in the site we had chosen and the sport we pursued; so that, soon, our tenancy even of what remained to us became jeopardised. It was then that we finally abandoned Harraka, securing, instead, the island with surrounding fishing of Vaarpa Saari, some three miles down the Vuoksa river and two above Imatra. This, too, was a delightful place in those days, and the fishing good; but not a patch on Harraka at its best. As time went on steamers multiplied on the Saima, the railway was carried not only to Willmanstrand but (separately) to Harraka itself and on to Joensuu; the fifty-mile drive from Viborg, in two-wheeled carts, through the chilly

night, was at an end, and with it the solitude, the remoteness, that made half the charm of Harraka. Then the water-power attracted, as some of us had foreseen, the attention of the manufacturer; pulp and other mills were erected, a large working population gathered, drunken men might be seen about on Saturdays and Sundays, tall chimneys belched forth smoke over our loveliest falls, and, in short, the glory that had been ours departed never to return. Soon no one will be alive who remembers its existence! Yet the fishing, I am told, is as good as ever—for those, that is, who care nothing for surroundings, for "atmosphere," who can catch a fish from a mill-yard with as much pleasure as from the side of a lonely tarn or the bank of an unmapped river—but not for me!

There was one form of fishing, not a sport indeed but a pleasant pastime, that could be indulged in nearer home. St. Petersburg out of the season—in summer let us say—was not as Paris or London at corresponding times. For, of those who turned their backs on the Russian capital when spring came round a very large proportion went no further away than from five to twenty-five miles by road, rail, or river, while many, including a goodly number of the rank and fashion, moved only to the green, wooded islands enclosed by the delta of the Neva; so that on summer evenings the "point," or sea-ward end of Elághin island, if not quite analogous to the *Bois* in March or Hyde Park in May, was, nevertheless, in pre-war days, the scene of a numerous and more or less fashionable gathering, with a goodly share of pretty women and many very beautiful horses. And the Point has this advantage, that it stretches out westward into the waters of the Gulf of Finland, which, in June and July, are, on most nights, flushed with a sunset glow that deepens, only, as it shifts slowly along the northern horizon to brighten again with the dawn. A mile or two out from the Point this glow was broken

in places by wooden platforms resting on piles and furnished with windlasses, rough shelters, and lockers half-full of ice wherein to stow the salmon until they were taken to market. For these erections, called *tónias*, were salmon-fishing stations, and from time to time you would see a biggish boat put off from one or other of them, to be rowed round in a loop by two red- or blue-shirted fishermen, while a third, with quick jerky movements, paid out a long line of netting over the stern. When all the net was out the loop was made complete and the crew clambered back on to the platform, manned the windlass and hauled in the net.

In the days I tell of it was a favourite amusement, not so much of the Russians as of the foreign residents and their friends from abroad, to pay a visit to one of these *tónias* and try their luck with the salmon, the custom being for the visitors to buy one or more hauls beforehand "on chance," the price being a matter of bargaining, dependent, mainly, on how the fish happened to be running. The more plentiful the fish, the bigger the price per haul—the result being, naturally, in any case quite uncertain. In my notes I find a record of one such excursion—in the nineties, it is true, but the description in general will serve as well for previous years.

Some ten of us, after a dinner in my rooms, set off down the Neva in a steam-launch, and cruised about the Gulf, making "music on the waters," to the ravishment of sailors and fishermen and such "fashionables" as yet lingered on the "point"; for we had a guitar on board and one already lovely voice, afterwards well-known to lovers of choice music in London and elsewhere.¹ Towards midnight we boarded one of the *tónias* and Ebsworth made a start by buying the next three hauls for Rs. 25. The men had been doing very well—they

¹ The reference is to Mrs. George Swinton, daughter of E. H. Ebsworth, Esq., then still in her teens.

had already caught since 8 o'clock no less than 46 salmon, the largest 36 lbs. in weight and few of the rest under 20 lbs. Latterly, however, the fish had been running less freely, or the price would have been higher. We waited patiently, chatting and singing at intervals, while the nets were spread three times and as many times hauled in, some of us lending ready hands at the windlass. But luck was against us, or against Ebsworth, who only got one fish, of 17 lbs., for his money. Then Major Waters, our new military attaché,¹ and I went halves in another three hauls for Rs. 15, the price coming down in consequence of the previous non-success. We drew two blanks, and disappointment was rife; but the third time, as the net drew near, there was a sudden splash, a silvery gleam and the cry arose "a salmon, a salmon!" The fishermen hurried their tramp round the windlass; splashes and gleams became more and more frequent; and shouts were heard of "two, there are two!" "three!" even "four!" salmon! This last proved to be a pardonable exaggeration, but when, after a while, the bag of the net was jerked on to the platform the Major and I found ourselves the happy possessors of three fresh-run fish weighing 18, 21 and 24 lbs. respectively—and all for the sum of thirty shillings! Then F. M. and another bought a final three hauls and got first a blank, then one fish and, to end up with, a bumper of five splendid salmon! It was now past 3 o'clock in the morning, so, after paying the fishermen, whose previous good-luck enabled them to contemplate ours without repining, we re-embarked with our prizes and supped merrily as we steamed up the Neva in broad sunlight.

We parted on landing, to wend our respective ways home; the excursion was at an end—or so it seemed. But for some of us there was a comic *finale* to come. M. and I took *droshkies* to convey our prizes home and

¹ Now Major-General Waters, lately commanding the British forces in China.

started down the Palace Quay together. Now, the floor of a droshky is small and with no protection at the sides beyond an inch or so of combing. The salmon proved slippery as the proverbial eel. Presently there was a shout, a flash, and behold my friend leaping from his droshky and dashing off in pursuit of a twenty-pounder that went slithering across the smooth wood-pavement towards the Winter Palace, much to the amusement of the sentries and policemen on duty! Hardly had he captured his prize and started homeward once more, when out went two of my salmon—I was carrying Waters' home for him as well as my own—and away went I and my laughing driver in hot pursuit on either side. M. now disappeared from view over the Palace bridge and what more happened to him I forget, but in my case I had to stop and give chase no less than three times before landing my fish at last in the larder at 19 Galérnaya where, an hour or so later, when the milk came, my Esthonian cook eyed them with no less astonishment than delight.

CHAPTER XVI

A hunting-trip to Vorónej—Rachel and Mario—English manners—The rolling steppe—A tragedy—Shooting wolves—A peasant superstition—Gagging a wolf—The marmot—Peter the Great and Mazeppa—Wolves and foxes—Count Pahlen's mistake—The Saiga—A field rehearsal—Count Adlerberg's purse—Russian bridges—The 'quiet' Don—Men in mufti—Napoleon I. at Avignon—Family recollections—The Empress Eugénie—Berezóvsky's attempt—Napoleon III.'s courage—*Vive la Pologne!*—A great fatalist—Bismarck's cigar—Origin of Berlin Congress—Marvin's feat—Gortchakóff intervenes—Bismarck's resentment—*Trahison!*—How Batoum was won—Andrassy's pose—Bismarck and the Poles—Franklin's equipage—The *nayézdka*—Pólovtséff's prayer—Schouváloff and Laboulaye—Paul Schouváloff and General Bogdanóvich—A celebrated phrase—Russia and Europe in 1863—Unmerited fame—"*Tant pis pour la Russie!*"—I miss a wolf and shoot a man—A white woodcock.

See map, p. 378.

At last the affairs of Europe quieted down sufficiently to allow of my accepting Schouváloff's invitation—the third in successive years—to shoot and hunt with him in the Government of Vorónej. I take the following account of this expedition from my diary :

24th September. Arrived at the station at 5.30 p.m. and drove in the dark to Madame Chertkóff's house, Lisínovka, and were warmly welcomed by her. A white house of moderate size and no architectural pretence. Within, an air of comfort and refinement ; a great many engravings on the walls, mostly French, of Napoleon and his campaigns, but some English, including one or two good mezzotints. In the

hall are some large original water-colours, hunting scenes by Sokolóff widely known through reproductions. Madame Chertkóff is a Páshkovite, Madame Páshkoff being, in fact, her sister, each born Countess Chernisheff-Kruglikoff.¹

At dinner the cabbage-soup was so superlatively good as to deserve remembrance, yet our hostess to begin with sent it back to the kitchen with the command *pribáv piertsú k étim shcham*: "add pepper to this soup," and I was rather pleased at recognising in *shcham* the dative of *shchi*, a real plural word not a mere plural usage like porridge in Scotland. After dinner, conversation having turned to music, Schou-váloff said: "I first heard Mario in Paris, in *Lucia*, a poor opera but he captivated me at once."² Later, in St. Petersburg, Madame F. asked me (she lived in the *Place Michel*) to come in after some ball or theatre and meet Rachel and Mario. Rachel was by way of playing the *grande dame*; eventually, however, after supper, we all became very gay and pestered Mario to sing. He refused, positively. Then we induced Rachel to try her persuasive powers and, finally, he agreed on condition that she would first recite something. I went next door to the brothers P—— and with the help of the servants got hold of some music, the family having gone to bed. Rachel then recited, as she only could, *Les deux pigeons*,³ but when Mario's turn came he refused again. There was a great outcry at this and at last he agreed to sing if Rachel would sit on his knee meantime. She consented after some persuasion, and taking her on his knee he sang with overwhelming effect Donizetti's *Raggio d'amor pareo*.⁴

"He used to scatter his money recklessly, and these same brothers P—— were greatly embarrassed once when Mario having asked them and many more people to a kind of fête

¹ Colonel Páshkoff was Lord Radstock's chief follower in Russia. Mme. Chertkóff's son has long been known as Tolstóy's most prominent disciple. At the time I write of he had lately married and the young couple were living the simple life in a cottage not far off, she cooking, he scrubbing the floor, etc., or so we were told.

² Mario made his *début* in Paris in 1838 (2nd December), in *Robert the Devil*.

³ Of La Fontaine.

⁴ From the *Romanza* "Il furioso." The date must have been quite early in 1854 when Mario and Grisi's Russian engagement overlapped that of Rachel. It may be supposed that Grisi was not present at this lively supper.

went to the "English Magazine"¹ and bought expensive jewels for every one of his guests! Then the Crimean war made me forget all about him, and indeed about any such things as operas, but somewhat later I was sent to Orlóff, our Ambassador in Paris, as aide-de-camp, and one evening heard Mario again and recognised him at the first note. Later still (1878), in London, I heard that he was in great distress in Italy and a subscription was raised to which I contributed, Queen Victoria heading it."

English manners, said Schouvaloff, offered extraordinary contrasts. He told us that when staying with Lord Dudley at Witley he received a telegram stating that the Grand-duke Alexis had arrived at Dover. He wrote an answer but Lord Dudley refused to send it to the station because he had already sent a telegram of his own that day, a Sunday I think. A guest kindly took it. Schouvaloff was very angry and thought of leaving at once. However, he remained over night and next morning, early, when leaving, found Lord Dudley at the door, who insisted on accompanying him all the way to Worcester, saying, in reply to polite remonstrances, "My dear Count Schouvaloff, I know what is due to an ambassador!"

At a race-meeting Schouvaloff was invited to the box of the Duke of — who said curtly, "How d'ye do? Luncheon at one; milady there," pointing into the box where his wife sat, and with that turned his back and went off elsewhere. The contrast between this and the bowing and scraping and polite phraseology that would have taken place had the position been reversed and the scene Tsarskoe Selo race-course, is certainly striking!

25th September. Drove with Schouvaloff in a springless *char-a-banc* over the rolling steppe, in contour much like our south-downs, but on a much bigger scale, and every inch cultivable. The deciduous trees, mostly oak, that fill the deep valleys and hollows are beginning to turn. These woods till you come quite near them are in many cases not to be seen, nor would their presence be suspected. Oxen fed all around us in the stubble; the mist lay low and the distance was as a level sea. Huge coveys, or packs, of partridges abounded; we saw, I should think, quite a hundred birds in three small patches of stubbed wood; but they were not easy to shoot, still less to find when shot, and we only bagged seven, of which

¹ Long the most celebrated shop in St. Petersburg.

I three. We saw bustards and twice tried to approach them with our *troika*, but could get no nearer than 100 yards off, which, without rifles, was too far. They flew about a mile and settled again. We again drew near, when fifteen of them flew up and off. Finally, I dropped off the cart and lay flat on my back in a black-earth furrow while the others drove round. Three birds came towards me and hope rose high. Alas! they took wing too soon and, though they passed just within shot, my position was so awkward that I missed them—that, at least, was my excuse.

In the yard there are some wolf-hound puppies (*borzóis*, so-called).¹ Also a few old or lame ones. One whole litter has crooked feet, from rheumatism it is said; and Madame Chertkóff wondered whether they were really native to this place. I suggested Persia as their original *habitat*. The father of all the pack was a celebrated prize winner "Charo-deika (Magician)," who would pin a wolf, alone; but that is rare, though two full-grown dogs will generally do it. The best dog here at that, however, is one of the local sheep-dogs. These are very large and fierce, so much so that, for strangers at least, it is dangerous to go out at night.

There is a wolf in the yard, too, in a dark dirty cell, of which we opened the door wide. He snarled and sprang from side to side but was cowed by a stick. He was taken last year. Perched near by was a *kréchet* (*Falco sacer*), such as are used for hawking on these steppes. One litter of dogs here has been got from a she-wolf by a *borzói*. They are particularly fierce; indeed, a horrible tragedy resulted, once, from this inter-breeding of wolves and *borzóis*. "Sasha" (Alexander) Dietz had under his charge at Gatchina, in the Emperor's kennels, two or three such half-breeds. One day his second child, a toddling creature of three or thereabouts, came running to the house crying that the dogs had eaten—I forget the child's name—his elder brother. The frantic mother rushed out; the alarm was given, but it was only too true. The children had been sent, as often before, across a field to the station to get letters; the dogs were loose in the field

¹ The trouble with this word is that it is an adjective, with *sobáka* (dog) understood. The *nom. sing. fem.* agreeing with *sobáka* is *borzáya*. It would be impossible to follow the case endings, singular and plural, in English, and *borzói*, the *genitive singular*, does well enough, being easy to pronounce. The derivation is from an old verb *borzúsa*, to hurry, and the meaning is "swift."

and, apparently, began playing with them as usual. What happened precisely can never be known—probably in the course of play blood was drawn or the child getting frightened struck one of the creatures—in any case he was torn to pieces and devoured there and then. The Emperor had the animals destroyed, the affair creating a great sensation.

26th September. Again an off day, that is to say no serious sport, which is to begin to-morrow. I shot one fox, however; Schouváloff, in the same wood, another.

In the next ring we sighted four foxes but not within shot. A covey or rather a pack of partridges got up in the open and I killed four with two barrels. I saw, too, many falcons, hawks and owls, including a hen harrier. I rode all the afternoon, taking photographs on horseback, moving, and of moving objects, but the results were not poor.¹ Two brothers Platitsin came on a visit; we got to them later. Under cover of a thunder-storm I tried, but in vain, to stalk some *strépeti* (little bustard), birds which gather before winter in flocks of hundreds and even thousands.²

27th September. We were up at 4 a.m. but nothing happened till a quarter past six—very wearisome. Schouváloff very angry with Schramm.³ We got off at last, in a *troika*, and drove 45 versts (30 miles) over heavy roads, the black earth sticking to the wheels like wet snow. We passed Platitsin's steam flour-mill and beetroot-sugar factory, and then skirted Prince Shcherbátóff's property where the shooting is reserved. Beyond his last wood we met one of our prickers who said wolves had just gone across from there to Count Sheremétiéff's first wood, where we had permission to shoot. These woods were some 300 yards apart and we stationed the *troikas* in between to cut off retreat, taking up our own positions with the same object in view—and it was lucky we did so for, twice, a wolf sneaked out, evidently hoping to get back to Shcherbátóff's, but seeing us withdrew. Presently the six huntsmen came up, each with three dogs in leash; but only half of them fit to tackle wolves. They were stationed behind

¹ It was early days for snapshots.

² Vaviloff, *Okhóta v Rossí*, Moscow, 1873.

³ Schramm, a German by descent, acted as land-agent for both Madame Chertkóff and Schouváloff, himself, in these parts; and as a renowned sportsman had been entrusted with all the arrangements of our hunt.

the guns, and, that being done, ten couple of fox-hounds (*gonchi*) were put in at the opposite end of the wood, which was some 250 acres in extent. The first wolf came out into the open, past my back. I fired but missed; Mouffle, a local land-owner of French descent, hit him lightly, and Schouvéloff killed. Mouffle missed a second and again Schouvéloff killed, and likewise a third. I was glad he should get the best of the sport, once at least, as he is so wonderfully generous, always giving up the supposed best positions to others.

Meantime, the dogs took two more wolves alive, one huntsman being bitten in the hand by a dog, as not infrequently happens when the wolf is being gagged while the *borzói*s snap at its head and neck.¹

We had now secured five wolves out of eight. At 3.30 we drew a larger wood where two more had taken refuge. I killed a fox and the dogs got one of the wolves, which they were allowed to kill to 'blood' them, they being a young lot. So far six out of eight. Here I saw an eagle, buzzards and a falcon, in fact the eagle and nine other birds of prey were all visible at once, over a single patch of wood, which speaks eloquently for the abundance of game, small birds, and vermin, largely due, of course, to the autumn flight of migratory birds now in full career. We passed the night comfortably enough in a Little Russian house. These are all alike—white-washed walls of wattle and loam; roots thatched with straw or reeds; chimneys of four long poles with small sticks between plastered over with clay and lime, the subsoil being of limestone. Many a pleasant picture did we see with these cottages for background, a few bright flowers in front, willows for shade on either side the street, groups of pretty girls in their national costume, and saucy children playing amongst the chickens and pigs in the foreground. The ploughs are drawn by three yoke of oxen, for the rich black earth (*chernozém*) is heavy and stiff. Winter rye, bluish-green in colour, is now about two inches high. Sunflowers, a regular crop, are already gathered, only the blackened, broken stems and seedless heads remaining, and anything in the vegetable world more tragic in decay than the sunflower it would be hard to find.

Schramm bargained here for hay for our horses (five *troikas* = fifteen, besides those of the huntsmen). He was allowed

¹ See next page.

to have it cheap on condition that he threw in the skinned bodies of two wolves. "What in heaven's name for?" "To boil down for the fat. The peasants will travel a hundred versts to get wolf's fat, which is thought the best specific for skin diseases; and is, moreover, a sovereign charm against the wood-spirit (*lieshi*)."

I was warned never to enter the woods with the hounds (*gonchi*), which are very fierce though small. At the edge, or in the open, they will not attack you, but inside are likely enough to do so; indeed, they were very threatening to-day at one time, till a huntsman rode up and called them off. One had a hedgehog in his mouth, which might well make any dog angry!

When hunting with these dogs anything you kill must be thrown up a tree at once or it will be gobbled up infallibly.

All the huntsmen carry bits of stick and cord in their pockets in readiness to gag the wolves. Last year, when Schouváloff was here, the dogs had run down a fierce old wolf, and one huntsman was astride of the beast, as may be seen in one of Sokolóff's pictures, many of which were painted in this district, some on the Chertkóff estate, gripping it with his knees and holding it by its ears, anxiously waiting for his comrade to gag it. The latter 'funked,' however, and did not even dismount, pretending afterwards by way of excuse that he thought the man could manage very well by himself, which was absurd. That night yells were heard and it appeared that summary justice was being administered to the 'funk' by the rest of the huntsmen, who took down his breeches and gave him fifty lashes with their whips, well laid on—and well deserved, too!

When the dogs become too old to hunt they are taken out cheerily, as if for the chase, and hanged in the nearest wood—a merciful death, or so the huntsmen say. There is a notable picture in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, by Paul Potter, in which the dogs are seen hanging, but this is the vengeance of the beasts, who are at the same time roasting Man, the arch-enemy, on a grid. Of the Russian marmot (*Baibák*), a large rodent common hereabouts, it is said that if you tie a rope to him and let him into his burrow a pair of oxen have not strength to drag him out again.

There is nothing exclusive, apparently, about hunting in

these parts. One sportsman, an old fellow on an ancient, hollow-ribbed white horse, joined us this morning, uninvited, and rode through the day. Schramm declares that as a young man he was the only amateur hunter in the whole district and that he took great numbers of wolves, etc.

When the woods are driven it is considered advisable to shoot anything and everything that comes out; the dogs work better and are less likely to get lost. Magpies here are simply innumerable. The Sheremétiëff estate of 80,000 dessiatines¹ gives an income of Rs. 120,000 only, whereas it should give at least double.

28th September. Rode with the *borzói*s three hours, from seven to ten, on a Cossack saddle, excruciatingly painful, but I managed after that to borrow an English one. We saw an eagle, but no wolves or foxes, though the peasants, ploughing, kept telling me they had seen wolves just before! Later I joined the guns; we then drew a wood and Schouváloff killed three foxes, the rest of us four more.

A report comes in that there are twenty wolves, at least, some thirty versts further on; too far to go now. The Mazeppa story here takes the form that Peter the Great, returning from Azoff, pulled the Hetman's moustache, who swore to be revenged. The *Khokhli* (Little Russians, plural of *Khokhól*) are proud, indeed, of their long moustachios but wear no beards. They so love the vast spaciousness of their native country, that one of them who in the dark chanced upon a verst-post in the boundless steppe was heard to growl "*Bezobráznaya tiesnotá*"! (Literally "Shameful crowding".) Many stories are told of people losing their way, which is easy enough both in darkness and during snow-storms, there being really no roads, merely tracks; nor with rare exceptions anything in the nature of a landmark.

Speaking of their language Schouváloff said that Orloff-Denísoff (great uncle of Sila—Countess Schouváloff's grandson by her first marriage) when Ataman (Hetman)-in-chief of the Don Cossacks, being well-known as a bad speaker, managed here nevertheless to make a speech that was more or less satisfactory. Whereupon, it was said of him: '*Il n'a pas le don de la parole mais, apparemment, il a la parole du Don*'; and if any of my readers are infected with the foolish prejudice against all puns, good as well as bad, let me remind them of

¹c. 216,000 acres.

"This is Peter"; of the great pun recorded in Longfellow's *Hyperion*; and of John Bright's reply to his little son who walking with him down Waterloo Place said, looking intently at what my mother aptly called "the lady playing quoits" "What does Crimea mean, father?" To which after a pause came the solemn answer, "A crime, my son!"¹

Kalítva, whither we are bound, was founded only a hundred years ago or so by Cossacks from the Ostrogójsk regiment.² At another village, near by, Riezanka, it is said that 150 Little Russians were killed by Tartar cut-throats—*Gurtoprávui* (stock-drivers). Hence the name (*riezat*, to cut). Tartar raids, we are told, were still feared in these parts less than a century ago.

The Sheremétieff choir, well-known in Moscow and St. Petersburg, was recruited here, and our women beaters sing well their part-songs as they tramp home, but Mouffle says the soldiers are rapidly spoiling things by teaching them inferior Great Russian songs, for which they abandon their own; nor is this by any means the returning soldier's worst gift.

29th September. At the same place—rain, fog, no sport. I saw seven bustard, quite close, but was not allowed to try for them lest I should give the alarm to a very problematical wolf!

30th September. *Khútor Daniéla, Birúchi Uyézd* (District). *Birúchi* is from an old Russian word meaning "herald," not from the Little Russian *biriúk*, a wolf. There are two kinds of sunflowers big and small, of which the latter are better for oil, the former for food. We went on to Gríshovka, 30 v., where canary and anise-seed are grown. A *Khokhól* before he buys land takes some of the earth in his hand and rubs it to detect sand, then smells and tastes it for acids. Schramm and Mouffle both affirm that wolves, here, have earths like

¹ I even procured the insertion of a pun in the *Edinburgh Review*, but only because when it came to my lips at a staid dinner-party no one had the intelligence to appreciate it. The question had arisen, "why does Russia curry favour with the natives of Courland?" "Because," I replied, "she hopes that in the event of a German invasion every Lett will prove a hindrance!"

² Ostrogójsk (from *ostróga*, a barbed fishing spear), a town 97 v. S. of Voronej, was founded in the seventeenth century by Cherkási or Little Russian Cossacks, who in 1664 formed themselves into the Ostrogójsk regiment. The town was a noted centre for the distribution of fish caught in the river Don.

foxes, which they dig themselves; also that they bring forth their young in them. (?) Dog-wolves will sometimes attack men when their mates have been killed. The fox keeps, when he can, to the hollows; the wolf strikes out, boldly, over the steppe. The fox goes against the wind; the wolf across it.

The peasants here—not knowing we were coming—made a ring last Sunday and killed two wolves, wounding a third.

1st October. Drew the great reed- and osier-beds in the hollow near the house. Saw an eagle-owl, a splendid bird. In the third ring Yákov shot a wolf and Schwannebach, who arrived this morning from Sarátov, a fox. Then we took the woods and I got three hares, one of which the hounds gobbled up before I could secure it. To-day the first woodcock were seen, come in, of course, from the North.

The *izprávník* (district police-inspector) joined us, by invitation, at dinner. Many anecdotes were told about Count Pahlen, formerly Minister of Justice, who speaks Russian very badly. He once described his own wife as a *publichnaya jénshchina* (public-woman) meaning *sviétskaya dama* (lady in society).

As to *stárostas* (village elders) all agree with Schwannebach when he relates that in the Sarátov Government if an exceptionally ragged and disreputable-looking *moujik* comes to see him he is sure to be the *stárosta*, the office being so burdensome and valueless that no decent peasant will take it! Schramm tells us the following story of a certain M. Vakhtin who was a great liberal. When the forest-laws were under discussion while admitting that the *moujik* had ideas of his own about woodcutting, he maintained that they were by no means unreasonable. "He goes out, of course, axe in belt. When he comes to a likely tree, the timber being necessary to him and his axe handy, he reasons that the tree is really no one's property—neither his nor the landed proprietor's, but just *Bóje dérevo*, God's tree, whereupon he cuts it down and carts it off; surely you wouldn't punish him for that?" Schramm's reply was: "H'm, h'm, all very fine! That's what he says if the tree is my tree or your tree, but if you or I cut *his* tree down there's no talk of God at all; his convictions on the subject are very definite and very different."

All cottages are now being white-washed in readiness for *Pokróf* (a feast of the Virgin special to the Eastern Church).

The reeds we drew to-day were twelve feet high. For thatching, the peasants use them at full length.

Schwannebach; "Are there any Saigá (*Saiga tartarica*) here?" Schramm: "In twenty-six years I have seen but one, which I ran down with the dogs and killed. There had been great snow-storms."¹

Schwannebach is agent to Countess Schouvaloff, for the Orlóffi-Denisoff estates in the Government of Samára and the Don territory. He says: "We bought our last lot of cart-horses at twenty-five roubles each, all round—good horses, ready for work. We are beginning to use horses for ploughing, as they work quicker and cost less." Schramm: "True, but oxen (which cost *c.* fifty R. each) are so much capital in hand; you can work them four or five years and then sell them for meat at a profit."

2nd October. To Skororib, the Platítsins' place, where we had a "parade" hunt with two hundred beaters. There was an open space of 100-200 yards between two woods and we were stationed at the edge of one already glowing with autumn tints. The guns were thirty yards apart and included the two brothers Platítsin, a local land-owner, Podolski, the *izprávnik*, and ourselves. There were said to be eight wolves ringed, but only one came out. Platítsin missed or wounded him slightly; I knocked him over with my right barrel, but he staggered on and I finished him with the left, though he stood up even then and moaned savagely, advancing one step towards me, before dropping dead.

In the other wood, opposite, driving it downwards, Schouvaloff got a wolf, and that was all. I rode a horse meant for Andréi Petróvich (Schouvaloff's son), a nice bay, half-Arab, worth four hundred roubles, bred by Schramm. Five bustards were seen on the way to the ring; the men said there were more than thirty of them. We had tables and chairs at lunch, a style of thing Schouvaloff and I dislike. We were told that an elk had been seen but they are rare so far south. Twelve years ago when Vladímir and Alexéi (Grand-Dukes) were here these very woods were driven, and, to everyone's surprise

¹ The *saigá* has been classed as an antelope but stands really alone, forming a genus apart. It is remarkable for the strange development of the frontal bones. There is a good account of this ungainly little beast in my friend Douglas Carruthers' *Unknown Mongolia*, p. 590 *seq.*, by his companion, the late Captain J. H. Miller.

and disgust, nothing came out. The *Stanovói*, (local police officer) who had collected the beaters, etc., was in despair, but, when asked the reason said: "I cannot understand it at all; *I drove it yesterday to make sure, and there were wolves and foxes in plenty!*"

At lunch the *isprávník* waxed eloquent on Finance, telling once again the old, old story of English gold used for secret service. Russia, of course, in her struggle with England always gets the worst of it, being, politically, guileless! Schwannebach told the story of old Count Adlerberg who thought he had lost his purse at the opera house in St. Petersburg. He gave notice to the police saying how much it contained in hundred-rouble and other notes. He was Minister of the Imperial Court, a very great personage indeed, whose good word was worth much money, and next day two police-officers came to announce that the thief had been caught and the contents of the purse recovered, but not the purse itself. They produced the right number of notes, smiling complacently, whereupon Adlerberg, to their confusion, said: "Thank you very much, gentlemen, but I found my purse and money intact at home!"

3rd October. I tried for bustard, again in vain, driving a yoke of oxen. We then drew the woods, 9 v. further on. The one thing that came out was a hare, which I shot; and this was the only discharge that morning except an accidental one, by the *izprávník*, unpleasantly near me! After lunch we drove on 20 v. to the river Don, passing through Sagunee and to-morrow's woods on the way. They are immense—1000 dessiatines (c. 2700 acres), and we are in despair, for they are too big to drive successfully in any case, and Schramm with the dogs has gone back to Grishovka to rejoin us only in two days' time!

We came to a bridge, the first seen for days, the planking rotten, as usual. Schwannebach: "When a *moujik* comes to a bridge his first thought is how to avoid it." Schouvaloff: "Yes, and often when I was *aide-de-camp* to the Emperor and had to drive great distances, the *yemshchík* (post-driver) would call out, 'there's a bridge, your honour'; and I would shout blindly, '*Mimo!*' (Go by!)," the fact being that in Russia, except when the water is too deep, you have, as a rule, a better chance of getting safely over a river driving past on either side of the bridge, than attempting to cross it, especially

in winter, provided, of course, that the ice is strong enough to bear the weight of horse and sledge.

4th October. On the banks of the Don, by no means the *tikhi* (quiet) Don we hear of and read of, but rough enough to make boating dangerous. The day broke with wind and rain, turning at 8 a.m. to a violent snowstorm, in which we started for the great wood of 1000 dessiatines after first trying to find some promised wild-duck, in vain. The two hundred beaters were sent seven versts away by mistake, so we stood three and a half hours in our places waiting for the game which eventually amounted to one hare killed by Schwannebach, and one fox and one hare killed by the peasants. The next ring was driven quite away from us; and the last furnished nothing at all, though four woodcocks were seen.

The Count was angry with Schramm for sending us to such a hopeless place, yet wonderfully goodnatured, as usual, and not shewing any irritation against the local idiots, who made success still more impossible by their blundering arrangements. Luckily the sky cleared and we had a sunny, though stormy day.

After dinner Schouvaloff launched out into recollections of an interesting nature. The reforms of 1861 were mentioned and I reminded him of a story he had once told me of an album. This he now repeated.

When the labours of the Commission, appointed by the Tsar to elaborate the conditions of emancipation, drew to an end he was asked to contribute his photograph to an album containing portraits of the members which was to be presented to Miliútin, their President. But it was stipulated that he should appear in *mufti*, and, not having travelled abroad for some time, he had only uniform, which caused delay. Eventually, he was told that the album was completed, though unfortunately, without him; and at the final sitting of the Commission it was on the table. He opened it and found, first, a portrait of the Emperor in civil dress, "God knows how they got it!"; then came Miliútin, Pánin, etc., etc., all likewise in *mufti*; and, last of all, a man in rags—a wretched-looking creature, with the inscription:

Pomiéshchik (Land-owner) !¹

"I was young and liberal—carried, indeed, rather too far in that direction—but this was more than I could stand. I

¹ After more than half a century the aspirations of the liberal band of 1861 have been realised by the Bolsheviks!

understood, then, the meaning of it all ; and you may be sure that my portrait was never added to the rest."

Schwannebach who—like other tiresome people I have met—never loses an opportunity of dragging in Napoleon, with or without excuse, did so now with happy effect, saying : " It is curious to reflect that though that time must seem to you but a short while ago, nevertheless the lapse of years is as great as between the French Revolution and Waterloo." *Schouvaloff* : " Yes, that is so." *Schwannebach* : " How strange that Napoleon should have shewn such fear on his way to Elba ! It was a Count Schouvaloff who convoyed him, and lent him his *shinél*¹ and cap as a disguise." *Schouvaloff* : " That was my grandfather, who was entrusted with the mission by Alexander I. He made no allusion whatever to fear on Napoleon's part, but he recounted to me how, indeed, he lent him the *shinél* and cap, and the scenes that took place by the way, the people being very much exasperated. It was, I think, at Besançon² that a hostile crowd collected and seemed so threatening that my grandfather harangued the mob, which had guessed who was with him. He succeeded in calming them, and Napoleon said : ' You have perhaps saved my life. I have nothing left to give you but this last pair of pistols, which I beg you to accept.' My grandfather took them as a memento and I still have them, with Napoleon's monogram on them.

" After the Crimea I was sent by the Emperor to Paris, not as a diplomatist but to be on Orlóff's staff. I was presented the day after my arrival to Napoleon III., and in accordance with French etiquette, by my name and military rank—I was only a captain—without title, yet he said at once, ' I think we have family recollections in common ? ' to which I replied : ' Yes, Sire ; I still have the pistols.' The Emperor beckoned Bachiocco, a Corsican, whose duty it was to arrange all the Court amusements, etc., and told him, ' I wish Count Schouvaloff to amuse himself well during his stay in Paris.' I saw Napoleon again in 1867 at the time of the

¹ The great caped cloak of the Russians—more often military, sometimes civilian.

² This was a mistake. Napoleon's route from Fontainebleau to Toulon went nowhere near Besançon. The hostile demonstrations began at the little town of Donzère between Montélimar and Avignon. The incident here related took place, I believe, at Avignon itself.

Exhibition. I was then already a general and chief of the Gendarmerie. He was extremely sympathetic; one simply could not help liking him. He appeared to have the same sort of influence a charming woman has. But, dear me, how he was 'done' by those around him! mostly *svóloch* (scoundrels)—though Rouher, I admit, was an exception. The Empress? Ah, no! Whatever people might say, she was a faithful wife to him, and her enemies could find no scandal—not truly. She was not so very beautiful in my eyes, and I think she was a bit of an actress, though I never could be sure whether she was acting or not.”¹

Schouváloff: “I remember Berezóvsky's attempt (6th June, 1867). We had been to Longchamps, to a review or parade, and were about to return—the King of Prussia and the two Emperors. They had driven to the Hippodrome, mounted there and ridden on horseback through the Bois. King William really saved Alexander II.'s life. I will tell you how. Berezóvsky had made his plans very 'carefully, and everything was in order. He was going to shoot the Tsar on the return journey through the Bois. At the review we all noticed that Napoleon, who was an excellent rider, could hardly sit his horse; he was evidently suffering great pain, doubtless from the complaint he eventually died of. King William called the Tsar's attention to this fact and asked him to propose a return by carriage under the pretence of husbanding their strength, there being still a ball or other function before them. So said so done; but the carriage had to be got ready, and, meantime, the people so crowded the direct way that we had to make a bit of a round. Berezóvsky noticed the police moving and understanding what it meant rushed across to meet us near the Cascade, where, indeed, he fired, but being hurried and disturbed shot off both barrels at once and blew up his own hand.”² I was with the French aide-de-camp in

¹ One who had exceptional opportunities of gauging the late Empress Eugénie's mind and disposition during the last forty years of her life tells me that in his opinion a “fearless sincerity” was a leading trait in her character.

² I give the story as I wrote it down within a few hours at most of hearing it from Schouváloff's lips; for, to my mind, it would take all value from these reminiscences if I furbished them up. But it does not follow that either Schouváloff's memory or mine was infallible. As a matter of fact Berezóvsky's first bullet was intercepted by the head of an equerry's horse thrust forward by its rider, M. Rainbeaux,

the next carriage and we tried to keep up, but fell a little behind and knew not whether either monarch was wounded until we reached the Elysée, where we were lodged, a little later than the Emperor Alexander.

"I asked one of our servants: '*Chto, tsieli?*' (unhurt?) '*Da*' (yes). '*Sláva Bóghu!*' (Glory to God!)

"I went in and found the Emperor dressing. He asked me to find out all I could—whether the attempt was directed against him or Napoleon, etc. At this moment there was a knock at the door, and the Empress Eugénie was announced. 'Impossible, I am only half dressed,' said the Emperor, 'tell her so and keep her a few minutes.' I went out and found the Empress staggering against the door. She seemed to be in a terrible state: she asked after his Majesty and exclaimed '*les scélérats*, they might have waited until your Emperor was gone,' thinking still that the blow was intended for Napoleon.

"I went off and found the police already examining Berezóvsky, whose wounded hand was in ice. He avowed all, protesting he had no intention or desire to injure Napoleon, who furnished him and his compatriots with safe harbourage. No, he aimed only at the tyrant, the oppressor of Poland! He was all but acquitted, *through my being there!* It was contrary to French law for a foreigner to be present at the examination of a prisoner, and they wanted to take advantage of this technical point. There was the usual dinner that night for the Emperor and his suite—including the Frenchmen attached to his person—that we had when we dined at home, which was not often. I arrived late and found a place left for me at the far end of the table. I sat down. The Emperor, at first, would not question me, though I could see that he was impatient to hear what I had to say. At last he could no longer contain himself and called to me in Russian '*Nashi?*' (Ours). '*Da!*' (Yes). 'It is too much—two years running!'—alluding to Karakósoff's attempt on 16th April, 1866.

"Next day Napoleon proposed to Alexander that as no one expected them at the Exhibition they should go there

just in time. It was on the second discharge, immediately afterwards, that the pistol, which had cost nine francs, burst. It is strange to reflect that a few more francs might have changed the course of history!

unattended. The danger would be negligible, the effect great. However, we were seen coming, the great gates were swung wide and we were soon surrounded by a crowd of at least 100,000 people, who displayed the utmost enthusiasm. I was extremely anxious, for Berezóvsky, for all we knew, might have accomplices—perhaps fifty or more. Then an alarming incident took place. A man suddenly rushed at Napoleon and I thought—Now we are in for it!—but it was only some Italian presenting a petition. Napoleon shewed great courage. He never moved a muscle, but took the petition and put it in his tail-pocket."

Schwannebach. "That almost reconciles one to his misdeeds. You remember the rope story? No! Well, after the *coup d'état*, he decided to make a triumphal entry into Paris, and ordered laurel-wreaths to be hung up across the streets with suitable inscriptions. Just before the procession started there was a heavy squall of wind, and in one prominent position a wreath was blown clean away, only the rope remaining, with the inscription 'IL L'A MERITÉE.'"

Schouwáloff: "Well, he seemed to think it too risky, after all; so, waiting some minutes, he took our Emperor away. The affair was a great success; the bravery of the two Monarchs was extolled in all the papers next day. But after that we had an escort of the *Cent-gardes* and, whatever the French might think, the affair cast a gloom over us Russians."

Schwannebach: "How about the scene at the Palais de Justice?"

Schouwáloff: "I was there. It was undoubtedly Floquet. It was a great mistake our going there at all, and I told Leboeuf so beforehand. On the road there were cries of '*Vive la Pologne!*' It was something new for a Tsar to hear hostile shouts!

"When we got there—to the crowd in the students' quarter—it was still worse. The great staircase was cleared, but two men rushed forward upon it and one of them, Floquet, cried '*Vive la Pologne, MONSIEUR!*' Yes, the other may have been Gambetta; I don't know. He would of course be unnoticeable then. Altogether it was very stupid to take us there and the result extremely unpleasant. . . . O yes, this was before Berezóvsky's attempt, which changed public opinion radically in our favour. After that, the people everywhere became enthusiastic and I think anyone who had repeated

the cry for Poland would have been torn to pieces! So that it did the Poles great injury.

"I saw Napoleon again in England. I went to Chislehurst, where he bored me sadly about some new stove he had invented. It was quite wonderful how calm he was and how reconciled to his lot. A great fatalist! Passing through Berlin a letter was presented to me by a mysterious individual begging me to procure for Fleury an interview with Bismarck. He was sure his proposals would be accepted and Napoleon restored! I had no instructions to meddle nor did I care to, but my sympathies in France were always Imperialistic; so on seeing Bismarck I just showed him the letter and asked him what answer to give. To my surprise he said: 'Tell him when you see him to come to me; I will arrange an interview *incognito*.' I telegraphed Fleury that I would see him at Calais. I could not stop in Paris. There (at Calais) another mysterious individual, a *sous-officier en retraite*, seemingly, handed me a letter saying that Fleury was laid up with gout, but would see me in England. I gave my address at Long's Hotel. On passing Chislehurst station I heard of Napoleon's death. (9th January, 1873.) Soon after my arrival in London Fleury came to me in a great state—exclaiming about the 'terrible loss,' etc. I condoled with him, but added 'It's no use going to Bismarck now!' '*Au contraire!*' 'How so?' 'There are Frenchmen still! *l'homme de Sedan est mort*—the Prince remains! Now, all can rally round him. I can die happy.'

"I was disgusted at the callous way in which he thus spoke of his greatest friend, when the breath had hardly left his body!"

Presently Schouvaloff resumed. "I first made acquaintance with Bismarck in St. Petersburg, and in somewhat strange fashion. He was brought to me by the police one day, soon after his arrival in 1859, for smoking when crossing the Police Bridge.¹ He was furious; the *gorodovói* (policeman) had crushed his cigar and scorched his fingers. He gave no promise then of the great man he became. Quite the contrary. He was somewhat ill, gave one an impression of mediocrity and appeared to think his career already at an end. I knew him again when Minister in Prussia. I always

¹ In the Nevsky Prospect. Smoking on the wooden bridges is still forbidden, but the prohibition has long been a dead letter.

used to see him on my way through Berlin and we took to one another. He had such faith in me and my policy that he put all his money, every *kopéck*, into Russian funds. When I was named Ambassador in London, he told me, a few days after, as proof of his confidence in me—saying that I could easily verify it, and, indeed, Bleichröder (the Berlin banker) and others confirmed it—that on receiving news of my leaving St. Petersburg he had sold out all his Russian stock, though men of business remonstrated with him, saying it was not the time. He insisted. Russians rose, it is true, but then came the war and down they went. He tells me still that I rendered him a great service."

The conversation now turned on the Berlin Congress. Schouváloff said: "I was at a Council at Tsarskoe when the Grand-dukes Nikolai Nikolaivich, Commander-in-Chief in Turkey, and Michael Nikolaivich, holding the same position in the Caucasus, Miliútine, War Minister, and Reutern, Finance Minister, all agreed that it was impossible to continue the war. Nicolai Nikolaivich's report was—'We have thousands of the Guard sick at San Stéfano. In case of an English attack it will be impossible to save the sick, let alone the guns.'¹ Michael Nikolaivich said—'If the English land one single regiment in the Caucasus I cannot meet it, so many of my best troops have been sent to Turkey.' (There was talk of an English landing at Poti.) The Emperor turned to me and said—'You and Bismarck are good friends. Use your influence and get the Congress arranged!'"

Nikolai Nikolaivich was recalled to St. Petersburg at his own request on the 17th/29th April, 1878, and replaced by Todleben. He had previously demanded categorical instructions for any hostile action in view of the unfavourable condition of the army under his command. Schouváloff reached St. Petersburg on the 30th April (12th May). The Council at Tsarskoe took place almost immediately afterwards. Schouváloff then returned to London, where, on the 18th/30th May, Bismarck having insisted on it as a preliminary to the Congress, he concluded with

¹ This confirms what Lord Beaconsfield wrote to Lady Bradford on 23rd October, 1877: "the collapse of the Russian army is complete." *Op. cit.* vol. vi. p. 190.

Lord Salisbury the famous Agreement, divulged by Charles Marvin in the *Globe*.¹

The Tsar wrote to Todleben :

"The arrival of Count Schouvaloff has given us some hope that peace will be preserved. The negotiations with Austria have so far given no positive result but the main question is to be decided in a few days' time in London. If an agreement is come to with England it is not likely that Austria alone will decide to declare war on us and should she do so now we may suppose that Turkey will be on our side rather, seeing that Austria makes no disguise of her desire to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina permanently." ²

The dangerous nature of the Russian military position in Turkey in 1878 was pointed out on 31st May by the St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Times* (Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace), who declared that the risk to the army in the event of a renewal of the war was beginning to be understood even in non-military circles. Obviously, if Austria struck by land and England sent her fleet into the Black Sea, the retreat of the Russian army might well be impossible. To resume Schouvaloff's narrative :

"The chief difficulty was that England according to the protocol of 30th April wanted the whole Treaty of San Stefano to be made subject to discussion, to which Russia strongly objected.

"I went back to London, seeing Bismarck on the way, and arranged matters. In London I received a telegram appointing

¹ *Op. cit.* vol. vi. p. 295. Lord Salisbury was furious at what he believed to be Schouvaloff's treachery, and threatened to resign. Schouvaloff resented the accusation indignantly, demanding an investigation. It turned out that Marvin, a clever young journalist who had acquired the Stokes method of memorizing, being engaged as extra clerk at the Foreign Office at 8d. per hour, had been entrusted with the precious agreement to copy, and had, as he said, Stokes'd it. He was charged with theft but acquitted ; in a material sense he had stolen nothing. He afterwards worked for the *Newcastle Chronicle*, and made a name for himself by his books on Central Asia. He died young. I have always thought that he erred through vanity rather than through any meaner impulse.

² See *Russki Bibliographicheski Slovar*. Alexander II., pp. 843-4.

me first plenipotentiary for Russia. But I refused acceptance save on condition of coming, first, to St. Petersburg, if only for twenty-four hours, to receive verbal instructions. I went there and suggested Miliutine as first plenipotentiary—in vain. The Emperor said: 'The War Minister is necessary to me here. I cannot do without him.' Coming back through Berlin I called, of course, again on Bismarck, who said he would now have the opportunity of proving his friendship not by words but by deeds. Whilst I was with him a messenger brought in a telegram which he opened and read with evident astonishment and disgust. It was from von Schweinitz, German Ambassador in St. Petersburg, to the effect that the Emperor had paid a visit to Gortchakóff; the old fellow had claimed his right to represent Russia, and '*malheureusement l'Empereur a été assez faible pour consentir . . .*' Bismarck was greatly annoyed and said: 'I retract all I said about helping you'." ¹

Bismarck's bitter resentment against Gortchakóff arose, according to his own statement, from the latter's conduct at Berlin in 1875, when, "aided by Decazes he wanted to play at my expense the rôle of saviour of France, to represent me as the enemy of European peace and to procure for himself a triumphant *quos ego*, to arrest by a word and shatter my dark designs." ²

"At the Congress," Schouvaloff continued, "Gortchakóff showed gross stupidity. When the Batoum question was reached he said to me: 'I hope you have had sufficient liberty of action so far: this affair I reserve for myself.' He

¹ In the *Souvenirs inédits* as quoted by Hanotaux this runs: "Tout est changé . . . nous resterons personnellement amis pendant le congrès, mais je ne permettrai pas au prince Gortschakoff de monter une seconde fois sur mes épaules pour s'en faire un piédestal." *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Sept. 1908.

² *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article "Europe." But, as a recent author points out, the antipathy between the two statesmen began a good deal earlier than 1875, at Frankfort, where "Gortchakoff traita Bismarck avec une bienveillance sans bornes mêlée d'une condescendance hautaine que l'autre ne pardonna jamais." *Bismarck et son temps*, P. Matter, Paris, 1912, vol. i. p. 461. Gortchakóff was Russian Ambassador to the North German *Bund* in Frankfort from 1851 to 1854. Bismarck represented Prussia on the *Bund* from 1851 to 1859.

resented all interference, but time went on and nothing was done. Bismarck became impatient, even brutal. 'I'm not going to ruin my health waiting for a settlement of the Bulgarian question: to-morrow is the last day of the Congress. The day after, I leave for Kissingen!' Now the basis of the Congress was to be unanimity. That evening Gortchakóff told me, with an air of vast importance—'The Batoum affair is settled. I have arranged everything with Bratiano,' the Roumanian!

"'But, *mon prince* . . .' 'Not one word, I beg! It is all settled; Bratiano and I have arranged it between us.'

"I went to Oubril to know what on earth it all meant: he said, 'He must mean Beaconsfield, who was with him this morning—both names begin with B.!' "

"Next day Bismarck opened the Congress. On the *agenda* of the day the first question was Batoum. Gortchakóff rose and spreading out a map with three coloured lines on it—red, green and yellow—said: 'I'm glad to say that all is settled between Lord Beaconsfield and myself.' Pointing to the outside (southern) line of the three he said: 'This is ceded to us.' 'No, no,' said Beaconsfield, 'not that but this,' pointing to the northern line on an identical map. Indignation of Gortchakóff! '*Je croyais qu'un lord Anglais n'avait qu'une parole.*' 'Wee, wee—oon *parole*—ceci,' said Lord Beaconsfield, pointing with his finger to the map.

"I must mention that Gortchakóff, on seeing Beaconsfield's map, came over to me and whispered or rather hissed '*trahison!* they have our secret map!' I asked Lord Salisbury 'What map is that?' *Salisbury*: 'Why, the map Prince Gortchakóff sent us yesterday!' In fact, he had got them from Oubril in duplicate and had sent one set to Beaconsfield! Bismarck now became impatient, reminding us that we had to go to the *gala* performance at the theatre. Finally, he proposed that the matter be left to the three second plenipotentiaries, Salisbury, Hohenlohe and myself. Salisbury began to protest. Bismarck, looking round: 'I think the majority of the Congress agrees to my proposal? Yes, I thought so.' With that, we three were left to settle it. Salisbury, of course, demanded the northern line, I the southern; Hohenlohe said: 'Very well, I say the middle.' I at once agreed and the thing was done. Thus through Gortchakóff's stupidity Russia really gained what would otherwise never

have been ceded: the English, in fact, were duped with the help of Germany.¹

"Russia had promised Austria, before the war, that she would not alter anything in the Balkans without consulting her. Suddenly came the treaty of San Stefano. Austria, naturally enough, was indignant.

"At Bismarck's desire, all questions were first to be discussed in preliminary conferences so as to bring them ready decided, as far as possible, to the Congress. After three such meetings I refused to attend any more as I could not stand the constant heckling of Salisbury and, particularly, of Haymerle.

"Another of Gortchakóff's feats had to do with the *enclave* question. My instructions were, whatever happened, never to give up the *enclave*—to join, if possible, the Montenegrin and Servian frontiers but in no case to let Austria in between them. I had a meeting with Andrassy on the subject who, as usual, struck the 'chivalrous' note he was so fond of, 'between gentlemen,' '*un chevalier doit*,' etc. But I told him quite frankly that my instructions on this point were absolute; it was a matter I could not even discuss.

"Next day he came to me, in a great state of mind, reproaching me with treachery. How could I treat him so when he spoke as one gentleman to another? What did it all mean? It turned out that he had since seen Gortchakóff who, being asked about the *enclave*, said: 'Take it, take it—*anything, so long as it does not remain in Turkish hands!*'

"Mehemet Ali, Turkey's chief representative, met cruel treatment from Bismarck, being snubbed continually and grossly."

Asked his opinion of Bismarck, Schouváloff said that, even in his case, Providence counted for much, very much. But he owed most to the energy and whole-heartedness he devoted to his plans and policy—to anything, in short, on which he set his mind. But even he was not always constant. "Thus, during the Polish insurrection (1863) he told me, two years running, that it was a great mistake on Russia's part to

¹The account in Schouváloff's *Souvenirs inédits*, as quoted by M. Hanotaux, differs from the above in detail, the maps produced at the session of Congress by Beaconsfield and Gortchakóff having on them the northern and southern lines only, respectively. Hohenlohe declared for a line half-way between them, and this was agreed to. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 1908.

persecute Catholicism as well as Polish nationality—confounding the two, as it were. When, afterwards, he began doing the very same thing in regard to the Poles in Prussia I reminded him of what he had said, to which he replied, 'I was then young and foolish. Russia was right!''

5th October. *Schwannebach*: "You know the story of the *stanovói* and Franklin's carriage? No? Well, the English Government applied to ours to assist in the search for the crew (in Russian as in French, '*équipage*' means crew or carriage). Circulars were sent to all Government and district officers on the northern coasts. One *stanovói*, in Siberia, replied that though he could not say absolutely that Franklin's *équipage* was in his district there was in such and such a village a carriage which had been left behind and remained unclaimed. It was old and hardly worth anything, one wheel gone and the shaft broken, but, likely enough, it was Franklin's *équipage*!"

Sport to-day nil. On our way to Bielogori, where we were lodged in the *zemskaya kvartíra* (a lodging kept by the local authorities for official guests), I shot a sparrowhawk, which passed me carrying a small bird in its claw. It fell dead and the little bird was also dead, but warm, and so convulsively clutched that it was difficult to disengage it.

6th October. Sterlet for dinner caught here in the Don.

8th October. Back to Lisínovka. After lunch we had a *nayézdka*. This was much better fun than shooting. Each man rode on horseback with three *borzóis* in leash, the thong looped over his body, round the shoulder, through rings in the dogs' collars, and the loose end held in hand. We rode in line, about 300 yards apart, and if wolf or fox started up the nearest horseman let go his dogs. The others held on grimly, the dogs straining and pulling you out of the saddle if you didn't sit tight. Then as the chase turned one way or the other the next man let go and, eventually, in a long chase, the whole hunt, every man and every dog, was in the run, going "hell for leather" after the game, whatever it might be.

11th October. Such a downpour that we put off the wolves. Presently the strong wind cleared the sky and the afternoon turned out very fine, with half a gale blowing. We went after partridges; birds numerous but wild and the shooting very bad.

12th October. At 10 a.m. to Koshárny, after the supposed certain wolves. Only one came out which Schouváloff killed.

I got two foxes and two hares ; and in Volkodáv one fox. The day's bag was one wolf, nine foxes, six hares, three partridges, one woodcock, and a hen-harrier.

We lost our way for a time, coming back. One wonders it can ever be found at night. The Chertkóffs, the Schramms and the black-and-tan pack are each of the third generation on this estate. There is a place called Chertkóvo and another called Schrámovo in this district.

13th October. Breakfast. I late as usual ! The conversation turned on Pólovtseff. Schouváloff said : " He plays carefully though generously. I remember that he once went to Paris, prepared to lose 150,000 francs or so at the Jockey Club. A Russian millionaire is expected to be open-handed. It happened, however, that he won 100,000 francs, from a man considered in Paris quite a gentleman ; indeed the Jockey Club is very exclusive. But this particular ' gentleman ' came, privately, to Pólovtseff and asked for the name of his bankers, saying that not having the money at hand he would pay it them in a few days.

" The money never came, nor any note of apology or explanation. Next year Pólovtseff, on returning to Paris, mentioned the fact and it got to the ears of his debtor, who immediately challenged him to a duel *for insulting him* !

" Pólovtseff had to accept the challenge and everything was arranged ; but the French seconds agreed that, though he owed satisfaction for the ' insult,' the duel could not take place until the money was paid. It never was paid and Pólovtseff said afterwards, ' I was only afraid that it would be ! ' The man was a scamp (*podléts*) no doubt ; *du reste* like so many Frenchmen nowadays." Schwannebach : " Are there no decent Frenchmen left of the old families ? " Schouváloff : " Some, but very few. Take the Floquet case. That was the cause of Katkóff's and Bogdanóvich's disgrace. Laboulaye too. He won't soon forgive me for what I said on being introduced to him ! It was at the Moriers. I was told the new French Ambassador was there, and, of course, it was my duty to be presented. He began, '*Monsieur le Comte* I am most happy to make your acquaintance. I have been sent here *pour reserver les liens* between Russia and France and have good reason to believe that my efforts will not be wanting in success. The friendship between the two countries is, indeed, already closer.' Something or other, I forget what,

had in fact taken place to give some colour to this claim. I replied: 'It won't be for long!' 'How? not for long?' 'Well, until you change the *personnel* of your Government you cannot expect Russia to feel any real confidence in your professions. Why, you were within an ace of making Floquet Prime Minister! You really cannot suppose that our Emperor will feel particularly well-disposed towards a Government, headed by a man who insulted his father!' *Laboulaye*: 'True, but that danger is past and I myself contributed to prevent it.' "

Schouváloff continuing said: "Mohrenheim¹ had of course spoken plainly on the subject. He had not even to ask instructions from St. Petersburg. It was understood that if Floquet became Prime Minister or Foreign Minister, he, Mohrenheim, was to go on leave. One day, however, Bogdanóvich came to Laboulaye and told him that Katkóff authorised him to say that Floquet's nomination would be very popular in Russia, where his escapade was long forgiven. Laboulaye telegraphed home accordingly, whereupon Grévy asked Mohrenheim how it was that he spoke so decidedly in one sense while Laboulaye telegraphed diametrically the opposite? Mohrenheim telegraphed to St. Petersburg, and the result was the disgrace (*niemílost*) of Katkóff and Bogdanóvich.² The latter used to travel as the official representative of Katkóff, and he would visit my brother in Berlin on the strength of having served with him at some time or other in the same regiment or brigade. Amongst other things he presented to the Emperor William something he had written about the Guards and asked my brother to get him a Prussian order.

"Paul was a bit weak in character and, though not liking the job, spoke to Bismarck about it, and the order would have been given had not I prevented it. Eventually Paul put him off saying that in Prussia orders were very highly valued and not easily given, etc. Later, after his disgrace, Bogdanóvich wrote to my brother saying: 'I hear with astonishment that you are the author of all the trouble and misfortunes that have lately befallen me' and so on. Paul consulted me: 'What shall I say to the fellow? He'll publish the correspondence in the papers of course and I don't

¹ Then Russian ambassador in Paris.

² This was early in 1887.

want to be mixed up in it ! ' Write what I tell you and you may be sure that he won't publish it.' The answer ran as follows : ' Much esteemed General Bogdanóvich. I learn with astonishment that you attribute to me the troubles that have befallen you and the disfavour you have incurred. Seeing that I am Ambassador in Berlin and not in Paris, whither your missions were directed, your proceedings did not fall within my sphere of influence or activity. Indeed, there was only one occasion upon which I had anything to report concerning you and that was *when you solicited, through me, a Prussian order* '."

Schwannebach, now, told the story of Mohrenheim when young, at the Foreign Office. Gortchakóff¹ had written his famous despatch after the Crimean War in which occurred the celebrated phrase *La Russie ne boude pas ; elle se recueille !* He was fond of reading out his writings to an appreciative audience ; and Mohrenheim being at hand he read this circular to him. Mohrenheim : " Excellent, bravo ! it could not be better ! etc. Yet if I might be allowed to make a mere suggestion. . . . *Quant à la phrase La Russie, etc., vous concéderez, mon Prince, qu'elle n'a pas de sens commun ?* " ²

Schouvaloff : " Gortchakóff was great at phrases. His political career passed under my eyes and I most decidedly deny him the possession of political genius, or even talent. Take for instance the celebrated despatch to the powers in 1863 which certainly figures as the biggest leaf in his laurel-crown. He wrote quite another, in most conciliatory tones and brought it to the Emperor for approval. Alexander the Second on this occasion displayed much spirit and firmness. Rejecting the draft he ordered him to re-write it in the sense of the despatch eventually sent out. Gortchakóff begged the Emperor not to send it, assuring him that it would lead to war ; and only when the Emperor insisted did he go and write a new draft. When ready he again implored the Emperor not to send it, but his Majesty stood firm. The despatch, of course, was a great success. Later on we were at Gatchina—the Emperor, Gortchakóff, Adlerberg and I—perhaps one or two more—and every evening we played cards. Telegrams kept coming in from all parts of Russia couched in

¹ Prince Alexander Mikhailovich, b. 1798, d. 1883.

² Baron Mohrenheim was afterwards ambassador in London and Paris.

magniloquent language—all addressed to Gortchakóff, not one to the Emperor! 'You have saved the honour of Russia, etc., etc.' The Emperor used to chaff Gortchakóff unmercifully about them, making him read them out, when he would wink at us who knew the truth.

"Here is another proof. When England agreed to the Berlin Congress, in principle, but demanded, as a preliminary, an agreement as to what would and what would not be liable to discussion, Gortchakóff telegraphed to me '*Notre programme est liberté d'appréciation et d'action pour tous.*' When I showed this to Lord Derby he said (here Schouváloff imitated Lord Derby's English accent) *Mon cher comte, qu'est-ce-que cela veut dire? Est-ce que le traité de San Stefano sera mis sur la table pour que nous le discussions*, point by point, you know, *oui ou non?* I had to telegraph again to Gortchakóff for a more definite answer. He replied: *Notre programme*, etc., etc., adding *et l'Empereur vous ordonne de vous y tenir*. The result was that England at once refused to take part in the Congress, which was only arranged, afterwards, through my good offices, by Bismarck.¹

"In his old age Gortchakóff became somewhat lax in his conduct towards women and at Nice one evening a *gendarme* remonstrated with him. He made an indignant protest saying that he was Prince Gortchakoff, Chancellor of the Russian Empire. '*Tant pis,*' said the *gendarme*, '*tant pis pour la Russie. Filez mon vieux, filez donc!*' I had this from the Emperor himself."

18th October. We had come, meantime, to Nicolaievka, a small estate of Schouváloff's own, without house. We now drove to Skororib, 20 versts, in dense fog. For the wolf-ring I was to have the worst number as Dietz and Schwannebach had so far had no chance at a wolf. However, it happened, perversely, that after the beaters had been yelling for a good quarter of an hour and I had quite given up hope of wolves a huge fellow came running out straight to me. I had so often been punished in this forest shooting for impatience that I let him come on, to get a certain shot. Unluckily he stopped just behind a tree—a wild peartree with a tangle of brushwood about its stem. I waited a bit, then cautiously raised my gun. Alas! he saw it and was off hot-haste, back into the thick. I fired and

¹ Cf. *Life of Benjamin Disraeli*, etc., vol. vi. p. 259.

hit him, as proved by the blood in his tracks, but not enough to stop him. He eventually broke through into the open, out of shot from any of the guns, and was literally ridden down by the huntsmen, Boris and Athanasii, seven versts away in the middle of a village. One dog only had stuck to him all the way. Without my pellets in his hind-quarters he would certainly never have been taken in this way, for he was an exceptionally large and strong beast. But I was not proud of my performance!

One evening—I forget the date—I made a very notable “bag,” a woodcock, a hare and a man, with two barrels—right and left.

It was Schouváloff who was hit but it was entirely his own fault, as, with his usual kindness and sense of justice, he was the first to admit.

The oaks were now all russet, the aspens and other deciduous trees a glory of red and yellow. Schouváloff was very proud of a new shooting suit, especially made for this trip, as a result of his last year's experience, of a warm brown-yellow tone, difficult indeed to see against the leaves at any distance, even in broad daylight. We had driven the last ring, a circular wooded hollow. The sun was setting and we were about to start for home, when Schouváloff, always the keenest, decided to draw the same wood once more *na avós* (on chance)! In the gathering dusk we took our places again, I having the end number on the right. The dogs were sent in and, presently, out flew a woodcock. I threw up my gun and brought it down neatly. At the same moment a hare rushed out—both these on my right. I bowled over the hare, the two shots following almost instantaneously, and was horrified to hear Schouváloff shouting, “Oh! Oh!” I ran to him and soon found that he had a pellet or two through the skin above one knee, a few more stuck in his clothes higher up. Luckily I had had No. 1 shot in my right barrel with which I killed the woodcock, No. 6 only in the left, with which I killed the hare and wounded my friend. It appeared that without any warning he had wandered round from his place on the extreme left, and, without realising it, had come within range of me on the other side of the wood. Happily no harm was done.

Our total bag on this trip was twelve wolves, sixty-six foxes, and a great number of hares, partridges and woodcock. Of

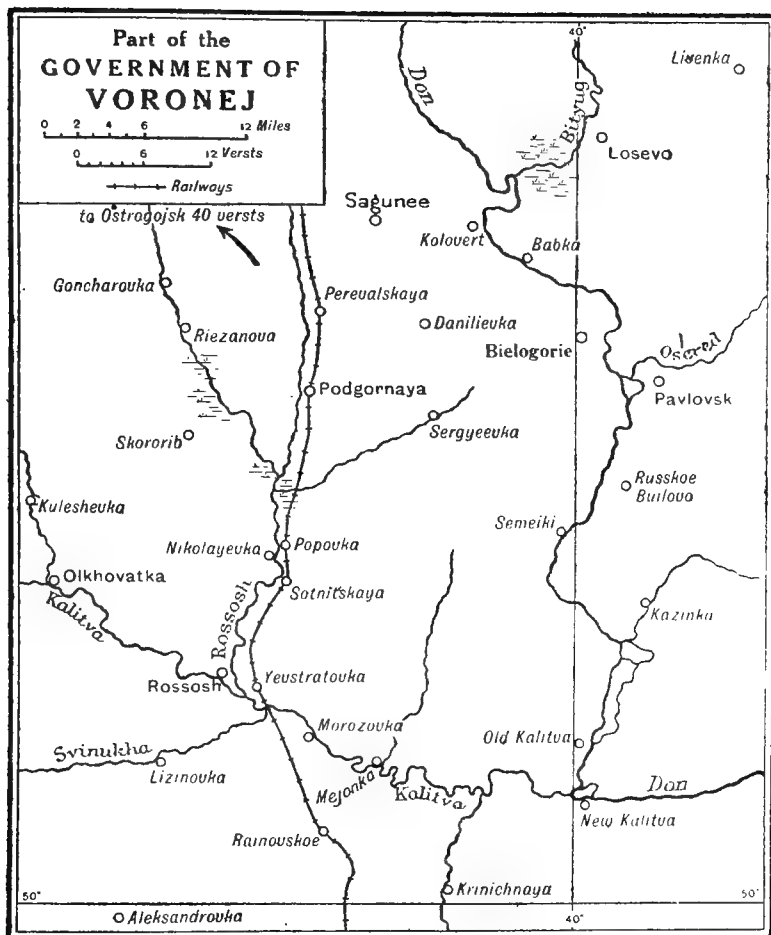
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the latter a very beautiful specimen, pure white all over, was shot in the garden at Lisínovka. At my suggestion it was stuffed together with a cock in ordinary plumage, the two in one glass-case.¹

I returned to St. Petersburg on the 22nd October, and dined that night with Dumba, Arthur Hardinge and Harford.

¹ I cannot refrain from calling attention to the very remarkable and beautiful collection of albino birds formed by the late John Marshall, Esq., and now in the Castle Museum at Taunton.

CHAPTER XVII

Russia and the Central Powers—*La Russie boude*—Scandalous France—Prussia and Germany—Responsibility of Alexander II.—Tsar meets Kaizer—The forged documents—Their meaning—Sadi Carnot—A sensational article—Recriminations—" *C'est une insolence !* "—Panic in Vienna—Lord Randolph Churchill—A change in English policy—Prince Ferdinand's fun—The hated *Engländerin*—A diplomatist at fault—David Garrick—De Breteuil's failure—Kaiser Wilhelm dies—The Battenberg marriage—The Empress Victoria—The Emperor Frederick's illness. Death of the Emperor Frederick—A friendly warning—An ungrateful editor—Sir Robert's foot—An Imperial visitor,

ABOUT the beginning of November, 1887, Count Kalnoky made a very violent speech against Russia in the Delegations, and this speech was said to have been inspired by Bismarck. The Tsar was in Denmark ; a projected meeting with the Emperor William at Stettin had been abandoned ; and it was felt that, whether he returned by sea or by land, if no meeting took place the only possible inference would be that relations between the two countries were strained nearly to breaking point. Every effort was made in Russia, France and Germany itself by those who for various reasons wished war, to prevent the meeting, even to the extent of handing the Tsar at Fredensborg a whole series of forged documents, of which more presently. Nevertheless, the Tsar decided, finally, to return through Berlin, and this was rightly interpreted as indicating that the meeting would take place.

Russia's attitude at this time was cleverly and accurately described by a reversal of Prince Gortchakóff's

celebrated phrase. It was now *La Russie boude mais ne se recueille pas*, and when such a Power as Russia sulked further provocation might well be deemed dangerous, so that Count Kalnoky must have felt sure indeed of his allies when instead of building a bridge for a Russian retreat, as circumstances seemed to demand, he deliberately cut off all such possibility by words that could only be construed as a wanton challenge. The result was that from simple sulkiness Russia passed at a bound to complete exasperation.

To what extent Prince Bismarck was responsible is not at all clear, but Germany chose this moment to commence an attack on Russian credit, which in the able hands of M. Vishnegradsky was at last showing signs of revival abroad. It was telegraphed from Berlin on the 10th that the Imperial Bank of Germany had issued orders to its leading branches that no more money was to be advanced on Russian stocks. This, naturally, gave great offence in Russia, and was made use of on all sides to fan the flames.

Europe at this time was simply seething with intrigue, and not only the press and the public but diplomatists, statesmen, even monarchs were amazed, bewildered, by the chaos of contradictory statements and appearances with which they were assailed and surrounded on every side. The peaceful policy of Alexander III., faithfully carried out by his chosen minister for Foreign Affairs, M. de Giers, was energetically, bitterly and all but successfully countered by the efforts of the Slavophil party, working above and below ground. In the same way Prince Bismarck's policy was not merely intrigued against, but openly opposed by his enemies at home. Nor in this matter were either the Tsar or Prince Bismarck themselves consistent; the former gave way once and again to the pressure of the Slavophiles, coinciding, it may be, with his own inmost inclinations, to the confusion and dismay of his ministers: Prince Bismarck, striving at

one and the same time to keep the peace with Russia, satisfy Austria-Hungary, and maintain the isolation of France, pending the moment when it would be possible to crush her, took steps that roused once more, and, finally, the Tsar's distrust and, eventually, led to that Franco-Russian alliance which of itself spelt defeat for his (Bismarck's) policy.

And all this, it cannot be too emphatically repeated, was conditioned largely, if not mainly, by the state of things obtaining in France, where internal dissensions were approaching their zenith with the Grévy-Wilson scandals, and the Boulangist fever; while, to complete the understanding of the international situation in Europe at this time, it is at least advisable to bear in mind the distinction, clearly pointed out by a French writer,¹ between the policy of Prussia and the policy of Germany. Prussia, as personified in King William I. and Prince Bismarck, desired, quite sincerely, the maintenance of the secular friendship with Russia, based upon the partition of Poland and cemented by the close family connections of the two dynasties. Germany's policy aimed at the extension of German interests, of the German race and its *Kultur*, towards the East, in a word it implied the *Drang nach Osten*. These two policies might run together; they often did. On the other hand, they might conflict, or rather they were bound eventually to do so. And the point is this, that, as our author puts it, *Prussia in spite of the personal alliance of the two Courts would at any time make war upon Russia the moment Germany's interests were at stake*. In other words, Prussia's friendship for Russia was sincere, but subordinate at any time to the higher consideration of Germany's world-policy. From this point of view we can see that while the Russian alliance was desirable to Prussia, the Austrian alliance was a necessity to Germany; and if one of the two had to go by the board it could only be the former.

¹ A. D'Avril, *Negociations relatives au Traité de Berlin*, Paris, 1886.

Prince Bismarck's task, it will be seen, was no light one; but the difficulties were not insuperable so long as England remained hostile to Russia, while internal dissensions kept France weak and this weakness and the ultra-radical elements in her government made autocratic Russia eye her askance.

It was easy enough later, when things had taken their natural course, when France had long set her house in order, when the Franco-Russian alliance had been cemented with blood, and the struggle between Slav and Teuton, seen to be inevitable by Skóbeleff, and not by him only, was being fought out, to condemn those Russian statesmen who in the "eighties" held to the policy of peace with Germany and believed in the sincerity of Bismarck's corresponding desire for peace with Russia. But those who know the internal condition of France at that period, who remember that she had forced Italy to join the Central Powers, who consider the hostile attitude of England and of Austria, and who admit that Prince Bismarck's policy though dual was not necessarily double, may well ask whether any other attitude was reasonable. Chauvinist Russians have vaunted Alexander III. to the skies, and put all the blame for what was not to their liking on his minister, de Giers; but anything more illogical and unfair it is difficult to conceive. Alexander III. was in the fullest sense of the word an autocrat; he had always at hand, often enough at his very ear, Ignátieff, Pobyedonóstseff, Dmitri Tolstóy, Katkóff himself. He was a slow mover; he took his decisions in every case with a full knowledge of these men's opinions; and, this being so, if he deliberately ratified the three Emperors' treaty at Skierniewice in 1884, if he renewed it and concluded the reinsurance Treaty in 1887—the praise or blame, the merit or demerit, is his. France being what she then was and the attitude of the other great European Powers such as we have seen, the probabilities are that in this matter the Tsar

did the best in his power for the interests of Russia. In any case *it was he who did it*, and the attempt—not by him personally—to shift the burden of responsibility on to the minister he chose, and maintained in office to the day of his death, is one that history will pronounce both mean and futile.

As to Bulgaria, no one outside Russia could fail to condemn the latter's subsequent treatment of the people she so nobly emancipated in 1879; but, again, this treatment was not merely the policy—right or wrong—of Alexander III., but the direct outcome of his private and personal prejudices. These prejudices one can well understand, and, as usual, to understand is to some extent to condone. To him, the provocation must, naturally, have seemed great—but, again, *the burden of responsibility is on him*.

The Imperial meeting took place in Berlin on the 18th November. Friendly relations between the two monarchs were reaffirmed; those who had set their hopes on an open breach were bitterly disappointed and raged accordingly. The Tsar, said they, had gone to Canossa; Bismarck had once more triumphed, and so on; yet, with curious inconsistency, the very same organs of the press pretended to believe that the visit had in reality put a final end to the good understanding between Germany and Russia. As a matter of fact, Russo-German relations merely resumed their normally friendly condition, which had, in reality, been but slightly affected by the events of the last few months. On the other hand, the political scandals in Paris had for a time utterly ruined any slight chance there might have been of the *rapprochement* between Russia and France so ardently wished for by the Panslavist agitators.

In Berlin the Tsar not only met his august relative the Emperor William I., but received in prolonged audience Prince Bismarck, who now learned from Alexander III.'s own lips of the documents which had been

handed to him in Denmark and which, if authentic, proved absolutely the duplicity and hostility of the Chancellor towards him. Prince Bismarck indignantly repudiated the charge, and procured the promise that the documents themselves should be communicated to him. On the 23rd the *Kölnische Zeitung* published the following statement :

" We hear from an absolutely trustworthy source that a whole series of letters and telegrams concerning Prince Bismarck's attitude on the Bulgarian question had been laid before the Tsar which were forged from beginning to end ; if they had been genuine they would indeed have given the Tsar every reason to be angry, to distrust Prince Bismarck's policy and to be excited against it. The original source of these forgeries was soon discovered. It is sufficient for the present to state that it is an Orleanist one. . . . In the course of the interview, however, it further came to light that a small but influential Party (*i.e.* the Jesuit or Roman party), moving in Berlin Court circles, have co-operated in awakening in the Tsar the erroneous belief that the Chancellor is not in complete harmony with the Emperor William in his foreign policy."

Prince Bismarck's revelations went just far enough to excite curiosity about the documents in question without in any degree satisfying it. No one in St. Petersburg seemed able to make the slightest contribution towards a solution of the puzzle ; but all save a few agreed in thinking that it was a case of no smoke without fire, that if, even, the documents themselves were forgeries the accusations they involved against the German Chancellor were not unfounded, that in very truth Bismarck was playing Russia false.

Early in December, however, the German Imperial Chancery received from St. Petersburg the whole *dossier* concerning the forged documents, some of which had reached the Russian Foreign Office through the ordinary official channels, while others, of a most confidential character, had been laid before the Tsar himself at Copenhagen by a relative whose co-operation in the matter

sufficed to explain the virulence of the attacks directed in connection with this incident against the House of Orleans by Prince Bismarck's organs in the German press.¹ The object of the intrigue was to drive the Tsar into more active hostility against Germany and to win back his goodwill towards Prince Ferdinand by furnishing in support of the latter's personal protestations of devotion definite proof of his unwillingness to act against the interests of Russia, notwithstanding the discouraging reception of his first declarations at St. Petersburg and in spite of direct overtures to him from Berlin.

The forgeries were, on the whole, fairly clumsy, and it gave Prince Bismarck no great pains to establish their character as such. In any case, Russo-German relations resumed their normal friendliness, and it is a fact that the authors of this extraordinary machination—very much against their purpose—contributed materially to the maintenance of European peace.

On 5th December M. Sadi Carnot was elected President of the French Republic, and France, which had been verging upon absolute ruin, entered upon a period of comparatively honest government. In fact, though the Boulangist trouble only reached its zenith in 1889, the revival of France may be dated from then.

It seemed that we might hope to close this troubled year, 1887, in peace and quietness, but again the "strange beast" clambered up on to the ice. A sensational article appeared in the *Invalide Russe*, in the form of an official *communiqué*. I missed it in the morning, there being as usual no heading; the *Invalide*, too, being a paper that on 360 days in the year had, for me at least, nothing of the slightest interest in it. Yet it was never safe to neglect it. In the afternoon, before going to see Sir Robert, I glanced at the paper again, and luckily noticed

¹ The relative in question was the wife of Prince Waldemar of Denmark, born Princess Marie of Orleans.

the article. I went to him and found that he had not heard of it, though he knew from de Giers that a *communiqué* of some sort was coming. De Giers himself had suggested to the Emperor that something *uspokoyitelnoe* (quieting) should be published about the rumours and statements in the German and Austrian press as to the movements of Russian troops. I learned later that when the article was shown to him in MS. he lifted up his hands in dismay, and begged the Emperor not to allow publication, urging the bad effect that would ensue. "On the contrary," said his Majesty, "it will have a very good effect indeed! Why it was you who asked for it!"

In form the article, which created a sensation in Russia, consternation abroad, as it was obviously meant to do, was an answer to the incriminations of the German and Austrian press with regard to the concentration of troops on the Russian western frontier, and it was the first instance in my experience of the official military organ entering into a controversy with its foreign contemporaries.

In Governmental circles it was explained that the intention was to efface the bad impression created by the alarmist articles of the Berlin and Vienna papers by showing how much less Russia had done than her neighbours. After enumerating Germany's preparations for a possible war with Russia, and noting that they were all, even the fortification of Graudenz, of an offensive, not defensive nature, the *Invalides* told us that Austria, in spite of financial poverty, had, like her mightier neighbour, done her best to carry out the programme dictated to her, not only as to the increase of her military forces, but also as to their speedier mobilisation and concentration. Her troops in Galicia had been increased by the advance of eighteen squadrons of cavalry and thirteen batteries of artillery from the inner districts, all these, as well as those already in Galicia, being horsed for a full number of guns and ammunition waggons. Still greater

stress was laid on the feverish activity in the construction of railways through the Carpathians, and especially of the net-work of lines, having, like that of Germany, a purely aggressive significance, to the extent since 1878 of four thousand five hundred kilometres, there being at this time six independent lines ready to pour masses of Austrian troops into Galicia, and nine central stations near the Russian frontier for their disentrainment. Numerous barracks had already been built, and depots of provisions to the extent of a million rations were being prepared, to say nothing of the forts, of which one actually commanded Russian territory, and contained a considerable number of railway waggons fitted to move on the Russian (5-foot) lines. Russia, on the other hand, had reduced her army between 1882 and 1883 by nearly one hundred thousand men, since which time it had only been increased by twenty-five thousand, whereas her neighbour's army had been increased by seventy-five thousand. In the matter of railways Austria and Germany together had constructed in the previous ten years nine thousand three hundred kilometres. Moreover, all the Russian lines were confined to the defensive triangle of St. Petersburg, Warsaw, and Odessa, whereas Austria and Germany had gone right up to the frontier, obviously to facilitate the concentration of troops. Thus Russia was threatened with a rapid invasion by both countries at once.

The best counter measure, it was argued, would be an increase of railways; but this would require both time and money. Nothing was left, therefore, but to increase the number of troops in the frontier Province, in order not to be taken unprepared. According to the article: "The increased military preparations of our neighbours last year compelled us to devise corresponding measures, which will be carried out by degrees."

From the Embassy I went to Schouvaloff, who said: "War between Russia and Germany is simply out of

the question. What for? There is no sense in it. *Kudá je nam v vojnú?* (Why should we go to war?) Of course it is possible that Ferdinand may be turned out, and the results of such a revolution might lead to our intervention; but I do not believe that even then we should do anything serious."

I dined that night at Hohenlohe's (of the Austrian Embassy). Dumba told the story of three Austrian soldiers—German, Hungarian and Czech. The German spoke in admiration of a very handsome piece of plate they had seen. The Hungarian regretted there had been no opportunity of appropriating it, whereupon the Czech brought it out of his pocket!

Law added: "Formerly it was said that the Austrian nationalities were arrayed for battle in sections—one behind the other, each section to fire at the one in front, if it showed signs of wavering!"

My Austrian friends, I found, believed, or pretended to believe, that if they were attacked Germany would at once join them and throw 180,000 men into Poland. When Herbert Bismarck heard of the *Invalides* article he exclaimed: "*C'est une insolence!*"

There was a panic on the Vienna *bourse* and much perturbation throughout Europe; but, as usual, Schouvaloff was right—the alarm speedily died down, peace remained unbroken.

At the beginning of the new year (1888) Lord Randolph Churchill was, with his wife, in St. Petersburg on a visit, of which, possibly, the importance has yet to be acknowledged. Sir Robert Morier was very greatly disturbed. According to Schouvaloff his feelings towards Lord Randolph were the reverse of friendly and he feared that the latter meant to get him replaced at the Russian Court by Lord Vivian. In speaking to de Giers he had—always according to Schouvaloff—made use of uncomplimentary expressions concerning both Lord and Lady R.C., such as were not of a nature to ensure them

a very friendly reception at the Russian Foreign Office. The Russian press talked a lot of nonsense, but Lord Randolph bore himself both discreetly and well. The following extracts from my note-books refer to a very important change in English opinion, which this visit may have helped to confirm.

January 13th. (Russian New Year's Day.) The Churchills were present with de Breteuil at the New Year's reception, but up in a gallery. Lord Randolph was elected honorary member of the Yacht Club, and has dined there more than once. He does so to-night; but he was near being black-balled on account of being brought forward by Pólovtséff, who is far from popular there. However, the favourable reception at Court settled the matter. I believe they had introductions from the Princess of Wales to the Empress. When they went to Gatchina, the first time, the *Official Messenger* next day stated merely that they had been presented to the Empress, and only the following day added—to the Emperor. The omission, it is said, was made on purpose.¹

January 15th. Yesterday I saw both Peter and Paul. Peter said that Randolph Churchill was going about saying that England would never intervene against Russia in a quarrel between her and Austro-Germany; that a great change had come about in public opinion, and the majority would no longer allow it. There is a rumour that Lord Salisbury has signed a document by which he adheres to the League of Peace (*i.e.* the Austro-German alliance). Lord Randolph declares that, if so, he will go back to England and make such a row in Parliament as never was heard, etc.²

To-day, lunching at Dumba's, Hardinge said he knew Lord Randolph well and the latter had spoken with him very frankly, nor could he suppose that he had told anything but

¹ Yet, as we know, Lord Randolph had a long and very frank conversation with the Tsar on this occasion.

² There is nothing of this in Mr. Winston Churchill's *Life* of his father; but on the return journey Lord Randolph lunched with Herbert Bismarck and writes:

"I have not a doubt that the Chancellor kept away purposely. He is a *grincheux* old creature and knows quite well that I will use all my influence, *as I have done*, to prevent Lord Salisbury from being towed in his wake."

The italics are mine. See further p. 395.

the truth. He seemed to have been very discreet here, but Hardinge admitted that he was, now, very much against intervention, having quite changed his opinion since the time of Kaulbars' mission, when he was for sending the British fleet to the Black Sea. Ferdinand told Prince Giovanni Borghese that his position was certainly a very bad one, "*mais il y a quelque chose d'agréable à être une puce qui chatouille quelqu'un où il ne peut pas se gratter !*", which gives one a favourable idea of Ferdinand's sense of humour. England had supported Battenberg more strongly than anyone and it was Austria's fault that he had not been maintained. Burian, the Austro-Hungarian agent, went to meet him, on his return after being kidnapped, in *mufti*.

At the New Year's reception the Emperor gave no peaceful assurances, either to Wolkenstein or to Schweinitz—naturally, for that would have been to admit that the fear of Russian aggression was not without foundation. But being hard up, doubtless, for a subject of conversation, he went so far as to congratulate the latter on getting the Black Eagle.

The Russian New Year decorations went to Timásheff (the St. Andrew), Pobyedonóstseff, Dmitri Tolstóy, etc., all Slavophiles. Schouváloff said of this: "As the way to get decorated is to do nothing I ought to have a fair chance!" He had been in Berlin, returning on the 2nd January, and said: "I had a conversation with the Emperor William, who asked why the *Invalides* article stated that he was making a fortified place of Graudenz, whereas, on the contrary, he had withdrawn whatever was there before? There was no answer possible. Prince Bismarck being away, I dined and spent the night till 3 a.m. with Count Herbert, who asked, referring to the escapade at Nijni, 'how about Deroulède?' I said: 'Oh, you know what sort of man Baránoff is; besides he was reprimanded for it? 'Yes, but he was decorated a few days afterwards.' Again, no answer was possible!"

According to Schouváloff the want of sympathy in Berlin governmental and court circles with the Crown

Prince was very remarkable. He noted this with much grief, as he had always been great friends with him. The explanation given was that they wouldn't care much if they lost "Fritz," so only that they got rid of *die Engländerin*.

Schouváloff told an amusing story of X——, a secretary of legation of one of the smaller Powers in Berlin, an out and out *blagueur*, always talking of royalties as his intimate friends, and not, indeed, as time went on, without justification; an amusing fellow withal, and eminently *bon garçon*. One day he received an invitation to dine with the Emperor. His chief, who had never been so honoured, was furious, but there was nothing to be done. X—— went and was most amiably received. After dinner the Emperor expressed his regret at his approaching departure. He protested that he knew nothing of it, and would be *desolé* to leave his *adorable Berlin*, etc., etc. The Emperor: "But I know it. You are to be promoted, and, as I wish you to leave Berlin with pleasant reminiscences, I confer upon you myself the insignia of the Red Eagle," suiting the action to the word. X—— went home, naturally, in the seventh heaven of delight; his chief was more furious than ever.

It turned out to be all a mistake. It was just after the visit of Alfonso XII. to Berlin and a very quiet Spaniard, whom nobody knew, was actually leaving on promotion. The German Government wanted to be well with Spain, and the decoration and honour were meant for him! The Berlin F.O. soon after sent to get the order back, on the plea that it had been given by mistake; but X—— said he'd see them very much further before he would give up a decoration conferred by his Majesty's own sacred hand—and he kept it!

Schouváloff also told me the story of Tom Michell and Alexander II. The Michell brothers, who had the advantage of knowing Russian at a time when that was a very rare accomplishment for Englishmen, were notoriously

anti-Russian in feeling ; and the Emperor had, or thought he had, reason to resent on the part of Tom Michell in particular, the eldest of them, who occupied the position of British Consul in St. Petersburg as well as of translator and attaché to the Embassy, not only political animosity but private and personal spite. In 1874, when the Duke of Edinburgh was a guest at the Winter Palace, Michell entered the building one day with the intention of calling upon some member of the Duke's suite. He had lost his way, unfortunately, in the vast edifice, when suddenly in one of the endless corridors, a door opened and he found himself face to face with offended Majesty ! Now, Michell was doing nothing wrong ; the loose ways of the Palace were alone to blame for the *contretemps*. But some of us would have sympathised rather warmly with the Autocrat of all the Russias, who, as he bitterly complained to Schouvaloff, could find no refuge even in his private apartments from a presence supremely distasteful to him. "Get rid of him," he cried ; "I won't have him here any longer. Arrange it any way you like. Let them make him a Duke, an Ambassador, anything—so long as he leaves Russia." The consequence was that Michell who had a somewhat warm supporter in the Prince of Wales, whom he had accompanied to Moscow in 1866, was transferred as Consul to Christiania, and his brother John, an even more rabid anti-Russian, was appointed in his place, in St. Petersburg, to envenom during many years to the extent of his power the relations between the two countries. Robert Michell, the third brother, served the India Office long and well as Russian translator.

On 26th January I dined with Schouvaloff ; he very pleased with himself, having shot a bear and two lynx (right and left) near Narva the day before, at a shoot of Pólovtséff's.

Towards the end of January, Charles Wyndham and Mary Moore came to St. Petersburg to play David Garrick, which they did in German—a notable performance.

I took Mary Moore to the fortress and to Peter the Great's house, and on to the ice to see the Samoyéds with their squaws, picaninnies and reindeer. I never felt the cold so much in Russia—18° Réaumur and a very strong wind—but my companion looked charming, wrapped in furs, and that to some extent reconciled me to my sufferings.

It was to Schouvaloff that I made resort on any and every occasion of need, assured beforehand of sympathy at least, of help prompt and efficient were help in his power. Thus, late one night, Wurts' servant came running round to say that my friend Buckingham, U.S. naval attaché, who was occupying his master's rooms in his absence, was dreadfully ill, perhaps dying; he could not find a doctor, would I help him? I went round at once, to find Buckingham, seemingly, in a state of collapse, having lost a great deal of blood. My medical knowledge was insufficient to tell me that, as a matter of fact, the case, though serious, was not one of actual danger. I sent the servant off hot-haste to one doctor I knew, and, failing him, to another. He came back after a time with the report that one could not, the other would not, come. I then bethought me of Schouvaloff, ran round to his house in the Milliónnaya, found him at home and told him what had happened. He, at once, took me across the street to the Preobrajénsky barracks, called up the regimental doctor and induced him to accompany me to Buckingham's apartments, where he soon relieved my friend's symptoms and my own anxiety.

From my note-book (date missing): "The Marquis de Breteuil, who has been here some weeks and was remarkably well received at Court (he dined *privately* with the Emperor—an unheard of honour), is said to have come to endeavour to get the young Duke of Orléans admitted as an officer in the Chevaliers Gardes. He went away two days ago looking rather crest-fallen, so, presumably, has failed." He had.

On the 29th February the Marquis, a leading Royalist, made a very notable speech in the French Chamber advocating cordial relations with England. There is, I think, an obvious connection between his meeting with Lord Randolph Churchill in St. Petersburg and the following passage in this speech: "Great efforts have been made to induce England to take part in the Triple Alliance and the Prime Minister of the Queen seemed for a moment to be inclined to take that course. But he soon saw that the feeling of the country was not favourable to that policy."¹

On the 23rd a note in the *Official Messenger* had recapitulated the views of the Russian Government on the subject of Bulgaria, and at the same time announced the policy it was intended to follow. Russia took her stand on the Treaty of Berlin, and asked her co-signatories, not, indeed, to enforce its provisions, but to enter a protest against their undoubted infraction by Prince Ferdinand. The step which Russia wished to see taken was a denunciation of the Prince by Turkey, the suzerain Power, as an usurper. It was hoped, of course, that this would be followed by his retirement from Bulgaria; but Russia officially declared that she had no intention of lowering herself by intervention in the internal dissensions of that country. When once a legal state of things had been restored and a prince duly elected in accordance with the terms of the Treaty, she would on the first sincere advance of the Bulgarians, through their representatives, be ready to forget the past and renew relations based upon mutual trust. Moreover, she disclaimed all intention of making anyone responsible for the past.

This Note was admittedly connected with the negotiations entered upon at Berlin by Count Paul Schouvaloff, the object of which, as now expressly stated, was to allay the general disquietude in Europe due mainly to the ambiguous state of Bulgaria. The Russian Government

¹ See *ante*, p. 390.

proclaimed its complete adherence to the views it had all along expressed on the subject—views which at the very beginning of the crisis led to the rejection of all idea of an attempt to restore a legal state of things by force. It was the knowledge of these views, and a belief in their sincerity, which had inspired me at every recurrence of the war fever during the past three years to maintain confidently that the danger was greatly exaggerated. This was true now, just as it had been true a year before ; the underlying fact being that those who were ready did not want to fight, while those who might otherwise have wished to fight were not ready.

On the 5th March the Porte, in compliance with Russia's wish and in consequence of Germany's friendly intervention in behalf of Russia with England, Austria and Italy, sent a telegram to Prince Ferdinand affirming that his presence in Bulgaria was illegal and contrary to the Treaty of Berlin. The prediction that Germany would help Russia to get rid of Prince Ferdinand seemed on the point of fulfilment.

Then came a long-expected event, the death of the Emperor William on the 9th March. Two days later Schouvaloff, speaking to me of the probable consequences, expressed a strong belief that the cause of peace would gain, rather than lose, by it. Even a fatal termination to the Emperor Frederick's illness would not, in his opinion, jeopardise European peace, *so long as Prince Bismarck remained in office* ; but for the moment the Bulgarian Question was now thrown into the background, and the former uncertainty restored.

With the accession of the Emperor Frederick, Germany herself was soon in the throes of a crisis, which attracted much attention in St. Petersburg, more particularly on account of the connection sought to be established between its alleged cause—the betrothal of Prince Alexander of Battenberg to the Emperor Frederick's daughter, Victoria, followed by Bismarck's threat of

resignation—and the relations between Germany and Russia. The Russian papers—under inspiration—took an unexpected line, arguing that the projected marriage would finally extinguish all hopes of the return of Prince Alexander to Bulgaria, and therefore could be treated with indifference. This was Alexander III.'s own impression, but an erroneous one. Such a marriage would certainly increase, not only the ex-ruler's pretensions but his chances, and therefore the danger of Russian intervention. However, the views of the Russian Government on this subject were perfectly well known in Berlin, where they were pretty sure to be treated with every respect.

As a matter of fact, the affair of the marriage dated from eight months back, and was only now brought forward as a pretext, the real cause of Prince Bismarck's offer of resignation being the Liberal tendencies of the new Emperor, and above all his determination to exercise his own judgment and authority, instead of blindly relying on the Chancellor and contenting himself, as his father had done, with affixing his signature to whatever measures Prince Bismarck chose to present to him. It was generally believed that, as on so many other occasions, the offer of resignation would lead to nothing but a fresh confirmation of the great Chancellor's power and influence. In the meantime, it had one result, and that was to bring home to the Russians something to which, with few exceptions, they had been extraordinarily blind, the fact, namely, that in Germany it was Prince Bismarck, so often vituperated by them, who was their friend.

Towards the end of April I had to revert to the subject of the Empress Victoria's position. Persons of good position coming from Berlin gave extraordinary accounts of her unpopularity in Court and in military circles. It was positively asserted that, in case of the Emperor's death, his widow would be the object of hostile demonstrations on showing herself in public. More than one reason was given for this unfortunate state of feeling ;

but the chief seemed to be the Empress's pronounced preference of her own country to Germany, and the fact that, being by far the cleverest woman at the German Court, she—to put it mildly—made little or no effort to conceal her superiority.

On the same day I uttered a word of warning against the optimistic reports that were appearing in regard to the Emperor Frederick's illness, stating that the Russian Government had for some time anticipated a fatal issue, and that very speedily. This was not altogether without influence on the policy of Russia, for it would obviously be foolish, in reliance upon the peaceful proclivities of an Emperor at the point of death, to alienate Prince Bismarck, who, it was thought, would become all powerful again under William II., and would give further proofs of his readiness, within certain limits, to help Russia to that real satisfaction without which she would certainly never rest content.

There was a painful lull in European affairs while the fatal issue to the Emperor Frederick's illness was awaited, though in May the German press renewed its attack on Russia, and especially on Russian credit.

On 17th June 1888, the Emperor died, and so great had the tension become that his death, though deeply regretted in Russia, brought with it a sense of relief, which was voiced by the *Nóvoe Vrémya* and other organs of the press. It was felt that now, at last, a way might be found out of that indefinite, uncertain state of affairs which had so long weighed heavily upon Europe. "Every Government," said the *Nóvoe Vrémya*, "can now unravel the accumulated mass of political entanglements and take stock of both the favourable and the adverse elements. The chief interest for us is to learn to what extent Prince Bismarck, in resuming his former authority in foreign politics, inclines to favour the hopes and plans which found an echo in Count Kalnoky's last speech, when he

declared that the Bulgarian Question was far more important for Austria-Hungary than for the majority of the Powers."

In the middle of June Schouvaloff was at Carlsbad. I wrote to him there, being anxious about affairs and feeling that the centre of all interest was in Germany, where he would know what was going on, and suggested that I should join him. He replied as follows (I translate from the original in Russian) :

22nd June.

DEAR FRIEND,

"I consider your coming here quite unnecessary. I know nothing more than what I read in the newspapers. Only the days I spent in Berlin were of any interest.

"I think on the contrary that you should remain where you are. There, very soon, *interesting events* may take place.

"You can state *with complete confidence* that the attitude of the new Emperor towards us will be *most friendly*, more friendly than anyone dreams of.

"I press your hand heartily. God willing I shall return at the beginning of July (Russian).

This for various reasons only reached me on the 27th June. On the 28th, late at night, I received the following telegram :

"It is announced from Berlin German Emperor visit Tsar St. Petersburg in fortnight and you seem totally ignorant of fact not a word from you about it what is use of your correspondence. Mudford."

It was this telegram that decided me to seek some other career than that of special correspondent, but I made matters even with Mudford before I left him !

I went at 11.30 next morning to call on Sir Robert Morier, who was intending to leave for England the following day. "Are you still leaving to-morrow, Sir Robert ?" "Well, I'm afraid I can't get off to-morrow ; but why ?" "You know that the German Emperor is coming here in a fortnight's time ?" "Oh, is he !" "Well, I have received a telegram from London to that effect, and

abusing me for not knowing it!" "Of course; nice sort of people your employers! Why, you're the only man who has been right all along and leading directly up to this—if it is true! But as to the visit I don't believe it; at all events not for the present. I was with de Giers at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, and he told me, formally, that neither Schouvaloff [Paul] nor von Pape [the German General who came to St. Petersburg to announce the accession of William II.] made any reference to a visit. Now, if it were the fact, de Giers might keep it dark, but he certainly would not go out of his way, deliberately, to mislead me." "But I have another reason for thinking it may be true. I have received a note from Peter Schouvaloff at Carlsbad advising me to remain in St. Petersburg, as *interesting events* may take place there in a very short time. That looks like confirmation of it?" "Yes, it does, and, mind you, the young Emperor is just the sort of man to make up his mind to a thing all at once and—whist!—off he goes by special train, you know! Is the news positive in your telegram?" "Here it is—" "By God! ha! ha! ha! I can tell you I am glad, often, that my foot doesn't reach from here to London or there are some people who would be well kicked! That fellow Mudford is a damned crypto-radical, I believe! You may make full use of what I have told you and telegraph that up to 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon nothing was known here, and it was considered very improbable that the visit would take place so soon. In writing to Mudford you can tell him that I say so, and why." "If true, Sir Robert, this will prevent your going to London?" "Yes, I'm afraid it will."

It did not, however. I saw him off to London at 11.30 a.m. on the 2nd July. Before the train left he said: "Up to now there is absolutely no official indication of the visit; but I *smell* something very strongly, and I think it will take place in the second half of July, not

before. It may be combined with the (Russian) Emperor's usual Finnish yachting trip." Sir Robert asked what I had telegraphed and expressed approval.

Afterwards, I learnt from Schouvaloff that when he went to Berlin on the way to Carlsbad he saw Bismarck, and heard from him of the Emperor William's intention of visiting Russia. He had decided to do so while his father was still alive, but it was doubtful if he would have been allowed to go then. "Bismarck added: 'This is a secret. I tell it you as a friend of more than twenty years' standing, *on your word of honour*.' Of course I could not say a word to you or to anyone, not even at the Russian Embassy; but I wrote, privately, to the Emperor Alexander, and to you, giving you the strongest hint I dared. In any case, why should your Mud——, Mud——? Oh yes, Mudford, expect you to know what is going on in Berlin, what the German Emperor's intentions are, before your colleague there? or even your ambassador? It may be a compliment, but it's not quite fair!" "Oh, editors are made like that!"

A glance at the file of the *Times* shows that vague rumours of a meeting between the two Emperors were first mentioned on the 23rd June. Three or four days later the *Cologne Gazette* stated that the Emperor William would pay a visit to the Tsar in July. On the 30th June the *Times* Berlin correspondent said the visit was still a matter of uncertainty and perplexity. It was only on the 2nd July that definite news came, and not from Berlin but from Vienna, where, of course, the idea of the new German Emperor visiting Russia before Austria roused jealousy and uneasiness that had to be allayed. It was this, doubtless, that caused the delay in settling the matter definitely, and gave rise to the "uncertainty and perplexity."

The Emperor William reached Peterhof by sea on the 19th July, and remained there a guest of the Tsar till the 24th. I sent, of course, many columns of telegraphic

description of the various fêtes and ceremonies. The visit was an unqualified success, and this made it the more incumbent on the various elements which had so long worked for European war to describe it as an absolute failure.

Schouvaloff came back from abroad on the 26th July. I took lunch with him, and learnt that during the German Emperor's visit no concrete questions had been discussed or even touched upon, and, consequently, no special agreement came to. But no greater mistake could be made, he said, than to argue from this that the interview would be barren of results. On the contrary, the complete accord and warm friendship established between the two monarchs, were of vastly more importance than any specific agreement upon one or other particular question; and, though efforts would, of course, be made in nearly every country in Europe to deny or lessen the importance of this personal alliance, those would be wisest who recognised it at once and shaped their policy accordingly.

As to the Bulgarian Question, there was no divergence of basis on the subject between Germany and Russia. Neither would recognize Prince Ferdinand, who would have to go sooner or later, but Russia had not the slightest intention of moving a single Cossack to turn him out, any more than Prince Bismarck would move a single Pomeranian soldier.

Perhaps "warm friendship" was too strong a term; it is never easy to estimate accurately human feelings; nor is it safe in any case to predict their duration. Moreover, contrary to all belief, Prince Ferdinand had come to stay. But, had Bismarck remained in power we know from him that the re-insurance Treaty would have been renewed in 1890; and it is a legitimate inference that the Franco-Russian alliance would have been, at least, postponed. Meantime Prince Ferdinand might well have been driven to resign.

CHAPTER XVIII

Last visit to Ruhenthal—Early rising—A Baltic baron—Pencil and varnish—The Battenberg marriage—A painful scene—How Prince Alexander obtained the crown—“*Cet imbécile là ?*”—Schouvaloff’s fiasco—Mops—Bismarck and the Poles—Whence the forged documents?—Spindle-shanks—*Delirium tremens*—Bells and no bells—Herbert Bismarck in Courland—*Nichevó !*—The Caucasus—Eternal fire—Law—Russian dogberrys—Taken for a nihilist—Arthur Hardinge—A brilliant trio—Turkoman rugs—*Ovis Poli*—A modest medallist—Hawking for quail—The Borki accident—*Recherchés* dinners—Bazaine, Bismarck and Morier—“The *Times* is the *Times*”—Prince Rudolph’s death—A notable advertisement—“*Nous l’avons pendu tout de même !*”—Prince Ferdinand’s nose—Death of Count Schouvaloff—His popularity—Political injustice—An unfulfilled prophecy—A “traitor’s obsequies”—“What *he* would have wished”—Burial at Vártemiaki—The *Nóvoe Vrémya*—A tipsy visitor—A cowardly defence—A good friend.

IN the middle of August I made what proved to be the last of my visits to Ruhenthal.

By that kind of perversity called by our American friends “pure cussedness” some of my best friends have been men born with a delight in early rising. Such was my elder brother, such my dear friend John Hubbard, who throve on it, for he brought sunshine into the room even when the sun was not up—the very sight of his face made heavy hearts light and dull dogs cheery. Schouvaloff was another of these perverse natures. However late the night before he was always up early. The lesson of the day read—and that he never missed—he

would get out of bed, dress, and be ready and eager for the day's work or sport—the latter for choice, in the years when I knew him. In short, like Don Quixote, he was *gran madrugador y amigo de la caza*—a very early riser and a lover of the chase. So now, at Ruhenthal, though growing old and stricken, alas!—though we knew it not—with mortal disease, he was matutinal as ever, and I, who never slept so sound as when it was time to get up, had to suffer day by day the torment of being awakened at some unconscionably early hour and forced to rise. At 5.30, or 6 at latest, he would come in unannounced, singing out: "What, asleep, Iván Ivánovich! Get up, you lazy log!" And poor Iván Ivánovich, who would willingly have slept another three hours, would grunt and groan and rub his eyes, but, at last, knowing there was no help for it, spring out of bed. Then only would my friend, with beaming face, say: "That's right! Coffee in twenty minutes"—adding "I've a feeling that the sport will be good to-day," or "The keepers promise great things," or some such allurement, for in such matters, and, indeed, in most others, he was ever an optimist.

On the 23rd of the month we went to stay with Baron von Bär, at his estate of Titelmünde, near Mitau, on the river Aa; the house a small wood-built château in the usual local style—sham tower, false battlements, etc. Our host, von Bär, was a tall, burly red-whiskered man (his crest—a bear—on all the window-panes!) rather like the stage Englishman in *Fra Diavolo*, but swollen out to Falstaffian proportions. Well-read and well-informed withal and very hospitable.¹ Several others were there—all barons, of course. We had a very good breakfast, then off to the woods, where ring followed ring; but only one buck was shot by lunch time, for which tables were set in the forest with many good things, including

¹ There is a delightful account of Baltic Province hospitality in the book already mentioned on p. 337 note, by J. G. Kohl.

salmon from the Dvina and home-brewed ale—the Baron's brewery being far-famed, so much so that "Titelmünde beer" used once to be found at Irkutsk—*made on the spot!*

After lunch we got one more buck and one young golden eagle; then came heavy rain, and all but our host, his brother, Schouvaloff and myself went home; in the last ring I shot a buck with No. 1 shot—very easy—15 paces. But it was early in the year, and very difficult to drive the deer out without dogs. On the way home I saw a "blue crow" (roller). The dinner was excellent; seven wines, including champagne (sweet, alas!), young black-game, etc., etc. After dinner Schouvaloff was in vein. Speaking of pencils he said that the Tsar (Alexander II.) always used a pencil and whatever he wrote was immediately varnished over. This varnish was a misfortune for Russia—as the hastiest *obiter dicta* became permanent decisions! For instance, a Governor of Courland once wrote that something more might be done for the Orthodox Church in that Province. The Emperor wrote in the margin: "This reads like propaganda. I won't have propaganda." This was promptly varnished, so in Courland nothing more could be done. Yet at that very time there was open and active propaganda going on in the other two provinces! "I used the varnish myself, at first, when Chief of the Third Section, but soon gave it up; for after a few weeks I realised what stupid things I had written!"

"As to Bulgaria, Bismarck, the other day, told me the story of the projected Battenberg marriage. The Emperor Frederick invited Prince Alexander to Berlin and agreed to the marriage. Bismarck insisted on resigning, and asked my brother to obtain a Russian *veto*. He was already very angry. Our Emperor (Alexander III.) answered that he didn't care a rap—rather approved of it, in fact, as then Battenberg would not go to Bulgaria! Bismarck was now raging (*wüthend*). There was a terrible

scene, and the Emperor Frederick at last gave in. He telegraphed to Battenberg not to come to Berlin till further orders. Then the Empress Victoria came into the room. Her husband told her what had happened and she attacked him, saying: 'You killed two of my children, and now you want to kill another.' What she meant I don't know. Two children died, but I never heard that their father killed them!

"The Emperor nearly choked; tore open his collar, and would have rushed upon the Empress but that she fled out of the room. He then sank exhausted into a chair.

"After the accession of the Emperor William his other sisters made a last attempt to obtain his consent to the marriage. They made a scene, fell on their knees before him and begged him to make 'poor Vicky' happy. He stamped his foot, pointed to the door, and said: 'Get out, you English sheep!'"

"How was it that Prince Alexander of Battenberg came to be Prince of Bulgaria at all?" "It was entirely my fault. His father, Prince Alexander of Hesse, came to me¹ and stated that it was the wish both of his sister, the Empress, and of the Emperor, of Russia. I went, therefore, to Bismarck about it, who said: 'If Andrassy agrees I am content. Settle what you like about Bulgaria. I don't care and won't interfere.' I next called on Andrassy, who was at first much opposed to it. So I asked him to dinner, to meet Hesse, at a restaurant. After dinner they walked in the garden, where I purposely left them together. At the end of half-an-hour Andrassy had given his consent. Then I went back to Bismarck, who also consented, and the affair was arranged. When I asked Hesse why he so much wanted his son to be Prince of Bulgaria, he replied: 'My son is a lieutenant in a Prussian regiment without a kreuzer in his pocket, and he may as well risk it.' When the Bulgarian

¹ At Berlin.

deputation arrived Prince Alexander of Battenberg went to Bismarck and asked him what he ought to do. To which he received the historical answer: 'Take it—you will at least have something of interest to remember.'

"When I got back to St. Petersburg I saw the Emperor (Alexander II.), who was quite angry that Battenberg had not refused the throne. He informed me that he had said 'Yes' to his brother-in-law merely out of politeness, but did not wish it, and, as a matter of fact, had some one else in view. He ended by saying: 'The Empress wishes to see you!' I called on her Majesty accordingly. She was ill, but received me, and also expressed strong disapproval. I exclaimed: '*Vous aussi, Madame!*' '*Mais oui; quoi donc, cet imbécile là?*' So that as far as I was concerned the affair was a complete *fiasco*."

In spite of this, Prince Alexander, as we have seen, succeeded in making his peace with the Tsar, and was quite a success, for a time—up to 1883, in fact. But after his abdication the Tsar told Schouvaloff on sending him to Berlin on some occasion, I forget what, "I have no wish to interfere in Bulgaria; I don't want to send one single soldier there, but *if Battenberg goes back I move!*" He instructed him to beg the Kaiser to prevent it. Schouvaloff ventured to say: "Then your Imperial Majesty cannot bear Battenberg?" "I should think not! *Mazúrik takoi, moshénnik!* (the scoundrel, the villain!)" I: "There must be some reason for this personal hatred?" *Baron von Bär*: "I heard that when boys together Battenberg nicknamed him 'Mops.'" I: "But why is Bismarck so much against him?" *Schouvaloff*: "He is a very passionate man, immoderate in his dislikes, and he hates him for being, as he says, a Pole.¹

¹ Prince Alexander of Hesse married,morganatically, the Countess Julie von Hauke, who was born at Warsaw the daughter of Count Moritz von Hauke, formerly Polish Minister for War. The Battenbergs were her children.

"The Emperor Frederick was asked by Bismarck what he would do with Battenberg when married? He answered: 'Send him to Strasburg as Lieutenant.' 'Yes,' said Bismarck, 'so that having betrayed the Emperor of Russia he may next betray your Majesty!'

"The forged documents came from two sides. De Giers received them in St. Petersburg, but before he had time to send them to the Emperor, then at Copenhagen, he received news of them from him, thence." *Baron von Bär*: "They are said to have come from Princess Waldemar at a picnic when the Tsar and she stayed behind the rest for some time." *Schouvaloff*: "It may be so; what is certain is that they came from France, and not from the Orleanists, as stated in the German press, but from the French Government itself."¹

Savouring the Baron's excellent claret, Schouvaloff remarked that the only time that he had been thoroughly well scolded by his father was when, as a young man, Count Andrew being absent in Sicily in attendance on the Empress, he and a chum, Count Stróganoff, drank up all the choicest wine in the cellar!

This Empress, Alexandra Feódorovna, wife of Nicholas I. and daughter of Frederick William III. of Prussia, was a very austere personage, the foundress, be it added, of many charitable institutions. Schouvaloff, who, of course, knew her long and intimately, now went on to relate, with evident relish, an incident that at the time of its occurrence overwhelmed him with confusion. As a youth, it seems, he was very slender and suffered no little mortification from the fact of being too obviously spindle-shanked. He was one of her Majesty's pages—Russian Court pages were adolescents, not little boys—and on some special occasion, with the help of the

¹ It is supposed that M. Flourens sent them to Princess Waldemar through the wife of the Russian minister at Copenhagen, a daughter of Mr. Berdan—the American whose rifle had been adopted for the Russian army—and sister to Mrs. Marion Crawford.

costumier of the Imperial Theatre, he appeared at Court furnished with a pair of well-shaped calves. Probably the Empress's eagle eye would have detected the fraud in any case ; as it was, discovery was inevitable, for one of the paddings got askew and bulged out sideways ! The wearer had hardly become aware, from the tittering of the maids of honour, that something was wrong when the Empress fixed him with a stony stare and pointing a finger of scorn at the offending embellishments exclaimed, " You ridiculous creature ! Go home, and take them off ! "

Schouváloff told me this morning the story of Prince Dolgorúky's sad death at Brussels. The wife, Princess Marie, was at Boulogne, and Schouváloff sometimes saw her there when passing. One day, just when European affairs had reached a crisis and a courier was due with despatches from Russia, he received, in London, a telegram from the Princess asking him to come at once : she had heard from a hotel-keeper in Brussels that her husband had gone mad. Schouváloff crossed to Boulogne, and together they went to Brussels, where they found the unfortunate Prince suffering from *delirium tremens*. Six doctors were called in, including the legation doctor. Schouváloff thinks they administered an overdose of narcotics. In any case, he died. The story got about and was published in the papers that Schouváloff had killed him in a duel,¹ but there was not a word of truth in it. The Emperor, afterwards, asked my friend about it, and gave him a scolding for having left his post.

On the 24th August we drove to Wirtzow, and shot all day in the Crown forest, where I killed a buck and missed another (an " impossible " chance), but, alas ! wounded a third. Schouváloff saw nothing all day.

We drove through the forest, he and I, on a queer sort of carriage—just one long plank a foot broad, on two pair of small wheels, a spring-board in fact ; very practical,

¹ That is the reason—the only reason—why I tell the story.

but very rough riding. He sat in front, I behind, holding him and saving him as much as possible from the shocks as we passed over rough ground—often without a path, and surmounting, even, fallen trees half buried in the boggy soil. He suffered a good deal, being quite unfit for anything of the sort. Between the beats he asked me: "Do you hear bells?" "No." "It's strange! I hear them all the time." He referred to this more than once, but there were no bells ringing. This was in reality the first indication of mischief going on behind his right ear, which developed somewhat rapidly and eventually killed him.

The forester, to my regret, shot a fine goshawk and gave it to me. We drove on to Mitau, and took train to Riga, arriving there at 1 a.m. We were to have gone on to St. Petersburg that day, but Schouváloff was unwell, and put off our departure until the next evening. A visit to Salven had been arranged, and Herbert Bismarck invited, for the middle of September; but my friend's condition grew worse, and though he insisted on my going as it might be of use in my career, he himself remained in St. Petersburg.

I left, accordingly, on 16th September, and next day Baron Mayerndorff¹ joined me at Düna (now Dvinsk). We reached Salven at 3 p.m., and found there Paul Schouváloff with his second wife and small children, his son, Pável Pavlovich, and a General Villiámov. On the 18th Herbert Bismarck arrived from Berlin.

Four days later I left Salven with Herbert Bismarck and Mayerndorff, drove to Römershof station, feasted on beer and sausages and took train to Düna at 9 p.m. There, on arrival, we sat in the special carriage provided for Bismarck till midnight, cracking two bottles of champagne, then separated, he returning to Germany, the rest of us to St. Petersburg.

¹ General Baron von Mayerndorff who had married a daughter of Count Paul Schouváloff by his first wife.

A year or two before this I had sent to the *Standard* a story about Prince Bismarck which they did not care to print. A fortnight or so later it appeared in some provincial paper—in Hull, I think—and went the round of the world. It ran something like this :

Bismarck, when Prussian Minister in St. Petersburg, was invited to take part in two separate shooting expeditions—after bears or what not—on successive days, and more or less in the same district. At the end of the first day's shoot his host found him a *mujik* willing for a modest sum to drive him in his sledge across country to the scene of the next day's *chasse*, a distance of some 30 versts. The man was just a typical Great Russian peasant, big-boned, loose-limbed, with reddish hair and beard, blue eyes, fairly regular though somewhat coarse features, and full of careless good-humour. The sledge was of the usual country make, rough but serviceable with plenty of hay to lie or sit upon. The shaggy pony looked well up to his work, and the harness was no worse than usual, that is to say, it was just a collection of fragments of raw-hide and leather, eked out with bits of string, and with cord reins.

Bismarck stowed his guns and valise carefully in the bottom of the sledge, took his seat, wrapped in a great bear-skin *shuba*, with felt-lined boots above his knees, *bashlik* and fur cap for headgear, and amidst a chorus of farewells from his companions started on his journey.

Fresh snow had fallen ; the cold was intense.

He had not gone far when, as usual, there was a halt. Vaska got down, saying "*Nichevó bárin!*" (It's nothing, sir), and proceeded to tie up some bit of the harness that had got loose. They went on, and again, after many objurgations from Vaska, the pony came to a stop. A thong fastening the collar to one of the shafts had come undone. Vaska, with a friendly nod to his fare and a confident "*Nichevó,*" proceeded to tie it up. There were other words and phrases that Bismarck failed to

understand. They had made considerably more than half the distance when a more serious accident happened. One of the reins broke ; the pony blundered off the beaten track into the soft snow alongside, and foundered up to his neck. Bismarck was thrown out, his effects scattered ; but by joint efforts of men and beast they were soon once more on their way. Vaska had said a good deal this time, but as far as the Count was concerned it all resolved itself, once more, into "*Nichevó!*"

They reached their destination late at night without further adventure. Bismarck paid the fare agreed upon with an extra-liberal *na-chai*,¹ having pocketed meantime an iron nail that had worked itself nearly free from one of the runners.

On his return to St. Petersburg, so the story went, he had a ring made from the nail, and on it graven the word *Nichevó* ; and when his friends asked the meaning of the ring he would tell them the story of his cross-country drive, winding up with : " Now, if ever I am tempted to abandon Russian friendship I mean to look at my ring, and remember that in Russia there are millions of brave, strong men, who, whatever difficulties and dangers they are called upon to face for God and the Tsar, will each and all of them say, *Nichevó*—and that is a nation one must think twice and thrice before quarrelling with."

I asked Herbert Bismarck about this story. He told me, as indeed I anticipated : " As a matter of fact it is not true : my father never had a ring of iron or any other metal inscribed *Nichevó*. But he very probably took that drive and received some such impression. In any case it's a good story—*ben trovato!*"

I have no notes of the visit to Salven, which may seem strange ; but the reason is definite and conclusive. Count Peter being absent through ill-health, there was no

¹ Literally tea-money, but in those days invariably expended on *Vodka*.

master-mind to control Count Paul, who was apt, especially after a long day's shooting followed by a copious dinner, to say pretty much what came into his head. His young wife, who did not know me well, was evidently terrified at the possibility of indiscretions that might find their way into the papers. At the first hint of this I assured her that she might rely absolutely on my secrecy, that I would take no notes and repeat nothing I heard. I was an amused spectator of the comedy played during the ensuing days. Count Herbert must have been very blind if he failed to see the frantic efforts made by the poor lady to control her husband's tongue. As for me I kept and keep my part of the compact, but I may say that nothing transpired of any real significance.

In October (1888) I went to the Caucasus on the occasion of the Tsar's visit, a full account of which appeared in my letters in the *Standard*. At Baku an amusing incident occurred. In company with Edward Law, who was now commercial attaché to the British embassies in St. Petersburg and Constantinople and to the legation in Teheran, I paid a visit to the *guebre* temple at Súrákháni, where, ridiculously enough, the eternal fire was fed through a pipe from the adjoining oil-refinery of Messrs. Kókareff. True worshippers had for some years ceased to attend the desecrated shrine but now, for their Majesties' amusement, some Hindoo money-lenders from Bokhara, subjects of our Queen, had been brought over the Caspian to make a show. The local dogberrys, instigated by Kókareff's Russian clerk, took us for Nihilists, and their suspicions were confirmed when Law began talking to the sham fire-worshippers in Hindustani. An attempt was made, presently, to arrest us which I foiled by the use of very violent language and the display of my special permit signed by General Cherévin, chief of the Emperor's private body-guard. On our return to Baku we were subjected to more annoyance by the police to whom our Súrákháni friend had

telegraphed. Law's black servant was arrested; sentinels were put at the hotel door; and Dobson, of the *Times*, was included in the embargo on our exit. When he insisted on going next door to get his hair cut, a *gendarme* accompanied him and watched the operation. A hot dispute in the dining-room of the Hôtel d'Europe, in the presence of all sorts of big-wigs, resulted in a second victory for us; I thumped the table, I remember, and demanded either to be lodged in prison or left to eat my luncheon in peace; and, eventually, Law, after my departure for Tiflis, received a public apology in the same room, on his behalf and mine. The serious part of such stupidity was, as I explained with great effect to the crowd gathered at Súrakháni, that the Russian police risked the safety of their Emperor by engaging in the pursuit and persecution of such innocuous people as a member of the British Embassy in St. Petersburg and the special correspondent of the *Standard*, instead of tracking down the real conspirators.

Law had just arrived from Persia after riding more than four thousand miles in his endeavour thoroughly to master the situation, commercial and political, in that country. Arthur Hardinge, too, turned up next day coming from Central Asia.

Sir Robert Morier, unlike some ambassadors I have known, loved to surround himself with clever people such as Hardinge, Eliot—who now that he knows Chinese and is learning Japanese¹ may equal even Dillon as a linguist—and Law, a brilliant trio!—and gave them every opportunity, especially by travel, to increase their knowledge and turn their abilities to the best account.

The deceit practised on the Emperor by the local authorities, whose laudable desire it was to make the visit a complete success, was not confined to supplying sham fire-worshippers at Súrakháni. The day before the

¹ Sir Charles Eliot, at present our ambassador in Tokio.

state entry into Tiflis I spent some hours in the fascinating bazaar, where I bought about the finest Turkoman rug it has been my lot to set eyes on.¹ That was from a picturesque old Persian, Kaffiroff, with beard and nails stained red with henna. But I also chaffered in the armourers' and other rows with keen-eyed, big-nosed Armenians for swords, pistols, daggers, chain-mail, silver belts, turquoise amulets and many other articles. Next morning, note-book in hand, I was jotting down descriptive passages about the various tribesmen in their fanciful costumes, who lined the street leading from the railway station to the Palace, when one group, in particular, caught my eye—men in hauberks and helmets of chain-mail, with round iron shields, and simply bristling with weapons of offence. These, of course, must be the famous Khevsours, the so-called descendants of the Crusaders, but hardly had my pencil touched paper again, to describe them, when one individual broke rank and thrusting forward a very fine shield said, in Russian, "Take it *bârin* ; fifty roubles only ; a genuine article ; very cheap !" and, to my disgust, I recognised in this sham "warrior from the mountains" a particularly villainous looking Armenian I had beaten down from two hundred and fifty to fifty roubles for this shield in the market the day before ! There were no Khevsours there at all ; the whole of this batch consisted of Armenians from the armourers' row dressed up in their own wares !

The Caucasus, especially the capital, Tiflis, has always been a great meeting place between East and West. There, one day, in that excellent hostelry, the *Hôtel de Londres*, I met Mr. St. George Littledale and his wife on their return from the Pamirs with heads of the *Ovis Poli*, of which they gave one to the proprietress—and

¹ The Turkoman rugs and carpets are now known in England as "Bokharan," and even "Royal Bokharan"—a complete misnomer. They are woven by nomads in their tents, nomads who defied Bokhara and ignored royalty. The finest, including mine General Verestchâgin told me, were made by the Sarik Turkomans of Pendjeh.

best of all landladies—Mrs. Richter.¹ In that same room, on a different occasion, I made the acquaintance of another well-known big-game man, Clive Philips Woolley, and still later I had the pleasure of chatting there with the late Ney Elias, gold medallist of the Royal Geographical Society, a traveller whose record will stand better than most the test of time, though during his life his own excessive modesty prevented due recognition of his merits save in very restricted circles.

When, at the end of his Caucasian tour, the Tsar left Batoum by sea for Sevastopol, on his way back to St. Petersburg, there being no possibility of getting a passage with the Imperial party, I was left to pass a few days in the very agreeable company of our consul, Demetrius Peacock, and Mr. and Mrs. John Annan Bryce, who had been obliged to continue their honeymoon in the Caucasus owing to some crisis in the petroleum trade between Batoum and Calcutta, in which Mr. Bryce's firm, Wallace Brothers, were concerned. Amongst other amusements we hawked for quail on horseback in the maize-fields on the lower slopes of nobly-wooded hills, with Elbrúz and other giants of the main range for background. The birds were so frightened that they would seldom rise and were more often than not taken by the dogs on the ground. But the scenery, the riding, the wonderfully picturesque costumes and trappings of our native sportsmen and their horses, added to a spice of real danger from brigands—they had stripped an unfortunate European couple a month previously and left them tied naked to trees—made altogether an ineffaceable impression,

Meantime, on the 17th/29th October, occurred at Borki, in South Russia, the accident to the Imperial train

¹ The first European known to have shot a specimen of *Ovis Poli*—Marco Polo's sheep—was the late Sir Henry Trotter in 1874 or 1875, when a member of the Forsyth mission to Yakoub Beg of Kashgar; the last Englishman, to my knowledge, Sir Percy Sykes.

from which the Tsar and his family escaped unhurt by what all loyal and orthodox Russia counted a miracle. The Nihilists, as a matter of course, were credited with another "attempt," and still are ; but the notoriously bad condition of the line, and speed and composition of the Imperial train—carriages light and heavy, old and new, miscellaneously coupled and drawn by two engines, one a "goods" the other an "express,"—were sufficient to justify me, in the absence of any direct proof, in attributing the accident to human stupidity rather than to any more sinister origin. Alexander III., a man of great size and strength—he could tear a pack of cards across and bend a horse-shoe—was said to have held up, unaided, the roof of the saloon-carriage whilst his family made their escape.

I returned to St. Petersburg and two months later (17th December) dined with Laski, President of the International Bank, a man of great ability and of singularly charming manners. The other guests were Count Pourtales, in charge at the German Embassy,¹ Baron, later Count, Aehrenthal and Dumba. Laski's dinners were the most *recherchés* in St. Petersburg. On the 23rd I called on Sir Robert Morier in regard to an attack that had been made upon him in the *Cologne Gazette*. He kindly but firmly declined my services, saying "between you and other correspondents, as you well know, I choose you ; but, on an occasion, such as this, between the *Times* and the *Standard* I choose the *Times*"—not from any particular love he bore that journal, but because, as he said, "after all, the *Times* is the *Times* !" He introduced me, before leaving, to Marochetti, the new Italian ambassador, son of the sculptor I had known as a child, when we lived in Onslow Square. As a matter of fact he sent the correspondence between himself and

¹ Pourtales was German ambassador at the Court of St. Petersburg when war broke out in 1914 ; of Aehrenthal and Dumba I have spoken already.

Herbert Bismarck to the *Standard* direct as well as to the *Times* and probably to other papers, whereupon the *Cologne Gazette* (January 3rd, 1889) published two letters from Major von Deines, an Aide de Camp of the Emperor William II., reporting statements which he alleged had been made to him in Madrid by Marshal Bazaine.

The first of these letters dated Madrid, April the 2nd, 1886, written in German, ends:—" 'The first news of the left march of the Germans across the Moselle I (Bazaine) obtained through a telegram from the English Envoy at Darmstadt, the same who has hitherto been here (in Madrid),' . . . I subsequently elicited the following further utterance on this point from the Marshal, who said, word for word, 'I knew nothing of your movements till the English Ambassador, Sir R. Morier, sent me word that the Germans were near Mars la Tour. This was not accurate, for there were only some cavalry soldiers there. I received this telegram *via* London on the 16th of August, in the morning.' "

Major von Deines' second communication was in French. It was dated Vienna, the 12th of November, 1888, and declared that the Marshal had made his statement quite spontaneously, that the German Prince, Louis Solms, happened to hear it, and that Bazaine afterwards definitely and clearly told him (Major von Deines) that the first news of the advance of the German armies reached him by a telegram from the English Envoy at Darmstadt *via* London.

Sir Robert had no great difficulty in establishing his innocence in this matter, to the satisfaction of his own countrymen at least, but if the German spoke the truth what are we to think of Bazaine?

The new year came but brought no improvement in Schouváloff's condition. By the first of February he had taken to his bed, never to rise again. At 9 p.m. on

that day Dumba came to tell me of Prince Rudolph's tragic death. I told Hardinge, who took the news to Sir Robert.

On Tuesday, the 19th February, I lunched with Dumba. Hardinge was there and, as usual, very interesting. His relations with Komaróff, of the Foreign Office, were "a sort of casual acquaintance based upon an accidental exchange of goloshes." Dumba said that according to both Wolkenstein and Klepsch the Grand-duke Vladímir was by no means stupid as generally supposed, but constrained to play the role of *Brutus*. Some one said: "If so, he acts the part uncommonly well!" But, in truth, he was not a fool.¹

Dragan Tsankoff, leader of the exiled pro-Russian Bulgarians, was here lately. He had an interview with the Emperor on February 17th lasting half an hour. He had now left, with several Bulgarian *émigrés*. Simich, Servian minister, the only one who really knew anything about it, seemed to think that this meant they no longer hoped anything from Russia. Tsankoff was not the man to play the rôle of the Polish *émigrés*, and, if Russia refused help, he would compromise with Stambuloff; but he—Simich—asked, where did the sixty people arrested for the protest on behalf of the bishops get money for bail from if not from Russia? Balabánoff might be rich enough, and one or two others. But the rest? ²

¹ Vladímir was brother to Alexander III., a handsome man married to a no less handsome German princess. Their palace on the Quay was a hot-bed of chauvinism. Their good-looking sons Cyril and Boris have since borne somewhat lurid reputations.

² A full account of this affair is to be found in the *Times* of 11th February, 1889. Some time previously the Bulgarian Synod had met in Sofia and excited the distrust of the Government, which suspected pro-Russian intrigue. The various dignitaries were ordered back to their respective dioceses; the opposition protested and sixty prominent Bulgarians, most of them followers of Tsankoff, signed a petition in that sense. On the 5th February forty-one of them were arrested, charged with sedition. Bail to the amount of £800 was demanded for each of the accused, and not all were able to obtain it—but many did.

Tsankoff, said Hardinge, according to Shakir Pasha, Turkish ambassador in St. Petersburg, was a mere black-guard.¹ When Shakir was appointed to the vilayet on the Danube, to induce in the Bulgarians a love for Turkey, etc., he was told, amongst other things, to edit a newspaper telling of the blessings of Turkish rule. Shakir had never edited a paper nor knew at all how to go about it. So he advertised for a *collaborateur*, "able to write etc., and thoroughly unscrupulous!"

Dumba, smiling, "One never knows when to trust Hardinge; that must be a touch of his own!" "No (indignantly), not at all! Well, Tsankoff answered the advertisement and was installed editor. Later, when the Bulgarian revolution began, which led to the Turkish massacres (1876), one of the leaders was captured and brought before Shakir, who told him he had better confess who really was at the bottom of it. He would be hanged in any case. 'Would they spare his life if he confessed?' Shakir couldn't promise that, but he had influence at the Porte and would do his best. 'Then the leader of the whole band is Tsankoff; it was he who betrayed the cipher!' etc. Shakir added: "Unfortunately, when we had got all we could out of the fellow, *nous l'avons pendu tout de même!*"

Dumba thought that Coburg could not last; it was only a matter of time. He was too Catholic and too insignificant; "there's nothing big about him but his nose!" Perhaps Stambuloff, Tsankoff, etc., would all combine to get a new ruler and make it up with Russia. But Stambuloff, in that case, would probably have to retire for a time.

¹ I do not suggest that we should accept Shakir Pasha's estimate of Tsankoff, who changed his religion and his mind more than once, it is true, but achieved distinction as a statesman and had no doubt, the interests of Bulgaria, his native land, at heart all the time. He was a fervid pro-Russian and helped to kidnap Prince Alexander. But whatever his faults we must be chary of condemning a man who had the misfortune to be born a Bulgarian as far back as 1828.

In the middle of January my friend's illness had taken a turn for the worse. The pain behind the ear became at times unbearable and the doctors seemed unable to do more than give temporary relief without attempting a cure. I have always believed that a timely operation would have prolonged his life, perhaps for years, but those in charge of the case shrank from the responsibility. It was sad, indeed, to see him suffer and be unable to help. My daily visits continued; we still talked of the political situation and events; and of hoped-for excursions to the Powder-works, to Vártemiaki, and, later on, to Ruhenthal. But it was not to be. He became worse, and by the 20th March it was evident that the end was near. I hardly left the house after that and on the afternoon of the 22nd after two days and nights of great suffering during which aphasia set in and his mind continually wandered, so that further communication was impossible, he died literally in my arms; for towards the end relief, such as it was, came only when I held him sitting upright in his bed.

The old Grand-duke Michael, the firm and faithful friend of this "traitor to his country," called before and just after death. Count Paul arrived from Berlin that evening, greatly distressed.

Abundant proofs were now given of the high esteem in which he was held, both at home and abroad. The Empress Marie was one of the first to telegraph from Gatchina her own and her husband's deep regret and their sympathy with the family. The daily services in the room where the body lay, converted temporarily into a *chapelle ardente*, were attended by nearly every one of note in the Russian capital. The Prince of Wales telegraphed to Sir Robert his deep concern on learning that the Count was dying, and later, in his own name and that of the Princess, their grief at losing so good a friend. They requested that a wreath might be placed on the coffin in token of their regard. Similar despatches

were received from every part of Europe, from many crowned heads, members of reigning families, statesmen, and diplomatists—people, in short, of the most varied nationality, rank and station.

This personal esteem in which Count Schouvaloff was held to such an exceptional degree, by nearly all with whom he came in contact, was in strong contrast to his unpopularity amongst a large section of his own countrymen on account of his supposed share in the Treaty of Berlin. The Russians could not or would not realise the necessities of the situation which compelled the abandonment of what they considered their rights as victors in the field; and the whole blame of the concessions, necessitated by causes with which Schouvaloff had nothing whatever to do, was thrown upon him. That he felt this injustice acutely, those who knew him best could testify, but he thought also that he had not the right to defend himself, and he suffered in silence.

One, at least, of his critics, Prince Meshchérsky, had the grace publicly to recant his former opinion, and with a frankness that did him honour. After recalling the deceased statesman's exceptional good looks, and mental capacity, and sketching rapidly his remarkable career, Prince Meshchérsky declared his belief that at the Berlin Congress Schouvaloff did Russia the greatest service in maintaining her interests as well as those of the Balkan nationalities; and ended by saying:—

"Ten years more and all will be of this opinion. Meanwhile, before the open coffin of this great Russian statesman, I feel it to be a debt to conscience and truth to give him his due, and acknowledge as wise what ten years ago I was ready, like the rest, to call treason to Russian interests."

The prophecy was not fulfilled, but in 1917 Miliúkoff made the significant statement reproduced on p. xv of this book.

The mortal remains of my friend were removed by road to Vártemiaki, for interment in the village church-

yard there. By eleven o'clock, the hour named for removing the body, the house at the corner of Milliønnaya Street, facing the Preobrajénsky barracks, was thronged with all that was most distinguished in St. Petersburg society, including nearly every adult member of the Imperial family.

The Tsar then arrived, accompanied by the Tsarína and the Tsarévich, and entered the house, where a short service was held. That ended, after gazing for some moments at the well-known face, crossing themselves and offering their condolences to the family, they followed the coffin downstairs to the hearse, then departed.

The pall-bearers included Paul Schouvaloff, the old Grand Duke Michael Nicholaivich and his eldest son Nicholas Michailovich,¹ and the coffin was covered with flowers, amongst which were wreaths from the Prince of Wales, Lord Derby, and Sir Robert Morier.

At half-past eleven the cortége started, the hearse being followed by the members of the family and many distinguished friends of the deceased on foot. Next came the Paul Regiment, in full strength, followed by the Gardes-à-cheval, the deceased's old regiment, two batteries of Horse Artillery, and a long line of carriages, the entire procession extending over a mile in length. The route taken was over the Trinity Bridge to the Trinity Church, where another service was held, and military honours were rendered to the deceased by the troops, who then returned, the hearse and the immediate relatives and friends continuing their journey to Vártemiaki.

Strange obsequies for a "traitor to his country!"

On reaching the lane leading up to the little country church the coffin was taken from the hearse and carried the rest of the way by the keepers and foresters of the

¹ This Grand duke went out of his way to show sympathy with me in my heavy loss. He was a man of culture and literary attainments. He has now been brutally murdered by the Bolsheviks.

estate, the men I had shot with these ten years, grey-beards who had themselves been serfs, and younger men, the sons of serfs. Count Paul with tears glistening in his kindly eyes turned to me and said "that is what *he* would have wished, Iván Ivánovich." I nodded assent, too greatly moved to speak, and at the churchyard gate we lent a hand ourselves. The tall birches drooped overhead, each branch and twig outlined in snow. The priests chanted, deep-voiced, receiving us; we deposited the coffin—open, as usual in Russia—in the church; there was a short service, and we all drove back to town, I with the Stackelbergs.

Next day, the 26th, with the old Grand Duke Michael and others, Count Vórontsoff-Dashkoff, Pólovtseff, and the many members of the family I drove up again the 20 miles to attend the funeral service and burial in the churchyard at Vártemiaki. Before the coffin was closed all present in turn stepped up and kissed the face or the hand of the dead man who lay there in his general's uniform, with waxen features—the body being embalmed—that had recovered all their nobility and beauty in death. Then the inner metal casing was soldered—a long and painful process for the stricken relatives and friends—and the lid screwed down on the oaken shell. We carried him out again and lowered him into his grave, threw, each, a little earth upon the coffin, and all was over.

Meantime the *Nóvoe Vrémya* which had at first maintained a grim silence came out with a virulent attack, in which were repeated all the old calumnies.

The feelings of the family at this outrage may be imagined. On the 27th Princess Bariátinsky (Nellie), Schouvaloff's step-daughter, went off to Gatchina, and asked to see the Emperor, but he had or pretended to have, a pressing engagement. The Empress, however, was dressing to come to town, so it was arranged that the Princess should wait at the station, her Majesty being informed meantime of her presence. When the Empress

arrived she asked her to go back with her to town and talk matters over ; so they had a whole hour together in the train ; the Princess, so she told me, cried a little and the Empress was very kind and promised to speak to her husband, saying " I am the more ready to do so because he is already disposed that way. He has said that it is a great shame, adding that your step-father behaved nobly, never attempting to defend himself, nor engaging in any intrigues."

That night General Cherévin came to the house, half-drunk as usual, after dining at the rich Necháyeff-Maltsoff's, and said that all was made right. The *Nóvoe Vrémya*—hiccup—was to get a "warning" next day and an article had been written by Count Lamsdorff—hiccup—of the Foreign Office, to be placed in the *Official Messenger*. "It is very badly written—hiccup—but no matter!"¹

The article duly appeared, on the 1st April. It explained that the attacks of the Slavophil Press on the late Count had excited great indignation in many circles including the highest. The Russian Government, therefore, now took the very exceptional course of publishing in the *Official Messenger* a note which, though necessarily guarded in tone, might be accepted as a sufficient reply to the insinuations of men who were themselves the chief enemies of European peace.

It was not the moment, we were told, to throw fresh light on the Berlin Treaty and the events from which it resulted ; but, after condemning the haste and partiality of those newspaper critics whose judgments were not only based upon imperfect knowledge, but were also by no means free from prejudice, the article pointed out the extremely difficult and delicate problem which Count

¹ General Cherévin was a great personal friend of the Emperor and as chief of the *okhrána* responsible for his safety. He was a lovable man in spite of his unfortunate propensity, which strange to say, did not affect his very clear brain.

Schouváloff had been called upon to solve. Without attempting to forestall the verdict of history, it might be stated categorically that the Russian Government, having the whole of the evidence at its disposal, deliberately rejected and condemned the theory that the deceased statesman had, wittingly or unwittingly, betrayed the interests of his country.

"Count Schouváloff understood that to have maintained the Treaty of San Stefano in its integrity might have drawn Russia into fresh complications such as would have disastrously affected her future. He thought Russia had shed enough blood on behalf of her Eastern co-religionists, and that it would be unfair to lay the burden of fresh sacrifices on the Russian people, while no efforts could prevent the raising of those questions which followed naturally from the late war. He believed in a great future for Russia, and understood the full weight of the responsibility which might fall upon him; but, like a true patriot, he felt that no personal considerations justified his refusing the ungrateful mission.

"Similarly, to the day of his death, he treated accusations made against him with unalterable calmness, resulting from a sense of duty fulfilled. Until full details are forthcoming only the protocols of the Treaty of Berlin can furnish in some degree the materials for judging Count Schouváloff's work at large. These protocols show with what warmth and dignity he defended Russian interests."

It was a poor defence—in sober truth a cowardly one; but Schouváloff's part in the Berlin Treaty could only be defended by putting the blame on the right shoulders and that no one dared to do! However, the time may yet come when a more complete vindication of his conduct will be possible.

My friend being dead I gave up shooting and before very long abandoned, too, the career of journalist, in spite of a certain offer the refusal of which brought characteristically strong language to the lips of my friend Sir Robert, who had exerted himself to an uncommon degree in my behalf. But, he soon forgave

me and continued to treat me with marked kindness so long as he remained ambassador in St. Petersburg. Thus, in 1893, when an attack of influenza had put my life in danger he sent on by hand the following characteristically warm-hearted note :

DEAR BADDELEY,

"Am most distressed at hearing you are so ill. *Pray* take a nurse. It's madness to do without—and take Sister Olga who nursed my poor boy, and is the best nurse and nicest woman in the world. I enclose her address.

Yours,

R. B. MORIER."

P.S. [in pencil]. Let her know that it is *I* who want her to come to you.

As soon as I could move I set out for Venice, and Sir Robert, of his own kindly thought, sent me a Queen's Messenger's passport with a made-up bag of despatches for his colleague in Vienna, to save trouble at the frontier.¹ Aehrenthal, the "arch-villain," then Austro-Hungarian ambassador in St. Petersburg, also gave me a recommendation to the railway and customs officials of his own country, so that I travelled in peace and in comfort.

Of a truth, in the course of my fairly long life I have received much kindness from many people, more, far more, than I can possibly have deserved, and it is above all with the idea of acknowledging this fact, in some degree and in regard to certain persons, that I have, not unreluctantly, put together this record of my life in "Russia in the 'Eighties."

¹ Letter and passport are before me as I write.

EPILOGUE.

March 16th, 1908. Yukki club. E. D., F. B., and self. Up at 5 a.m.; what an effort! The stars are shining in a cloudless sky, so it is hardly necessary to step outside, in the cold, to consult the thermometer. Still . . . oho!—15° (just below zero *Fahr.*) that will do us nicely! . . . Ablutions perfunctory, dressing hurried. Hot coffee, rolls and butter. Out at 5.40 and away down the hill at the back of the house, through the gap in the fence; then, with a fine swishing of crusted snow, we plunge through the pine-wood and reach the level without a spill—not a bad performance on this fast, hard surface. Soon we are speeding over the lake, the blood beginning to tingle painfully in face and hands. The stars are paling, the dawn has begun.

We reach the belt of birch-trees and alders that skirts the open bog, pass through it and halt, instinctively, at the further edge. We know that backward view so well and would not miss it for much! The red of early dawn—not rose-red yet—glooms through the lace-like tracery of leafless twigs and branches, all glistening with the icy sheathing and pendent fringes of yesterday's hoar-frost, melted and re-frozen; for the sun by now, on a fine day, has power at noon to overcome even two and thirty degrees of frost. The tree-trunks and the long shadows they already cast towards us are vaguely blue. The dawn-red passes upwards by imperceptible degrees through orange and green into blue and ever

darker blue to where in the west the stars are still shining—each tint of immaculate purity.

A white hare comes loping along and stops to stare, as well he may, at the strange invaders of his solitude. From the distant forest echo the rival challenges of amorous black-cocks—a voluble *cuckeroo*-ing, as of huge and not unmellifluous pigeons.

The elements of the scene are simple enough ; in form there is nothing grand, nothing even in the least degree picturesque—just a background of low hills, dark with spruce and pine ; with, near at hand, the belt of leafless birch and alder. For the rest, merely, what I, not less perhaps than Shelley, loved

“ . . . snow, and all the forms
Of the radiant frost ”

and the light of the coming sun. But it has a magical beauty for all that, a beauty that stirs the very depth of one's being . . . “ Come on ! my feet are freezing ! ” “ Both my ears are bitten ! ” “ That's nothing ! but we shall miss the sunrise ! ” So on we go, gliding easily over the white surface of the bog, level as a billiard table and nearly as smooth. Our *ski* just bite the crusted snow, barely enough to keep them straight. There is no need to “ break tracks ” ; the going is perfect ; we run abreast and talk as we run.

With an effort we climb the hill-top near Miansaari village just in time to see the first spot of fire where the sun's rim lifts above the dark line of the far-off forest. Rapidly the great golden disk mounts upwards till the whole of it stands clear, casting endless shadows on the snow, shadows now of intensest blue. We are all of us Zoroastrians at that moment ! Then again, some one cries “ Come on ! ” and away we go, scooting down the reverse slope, and across frozen fields and meadows to the many-winding Okhta, the passage of which demands some care ; for the current is swift, the ice not every-

where sound, the banks beneath the snow treacherous and difficult.

We cross without accident, and are soon breasting the hills again, to reach the church-yard gate at Vártemiaki just as the bells cease ringing their matin-call to prayer. There, on our right, is my friend's grave with its white marble cross inside the wrought-iron railing. The tall birches droop over it; in their branches a flock of bullfinches, gorgeous-breasted, whet their beaks, and utter plaintive notes. We stack our *ski* in the porch, un-cap, and enter the Orthodox Church—three men of foreign birth and alien Faith, clad in brown leather from head to foot, with frosted brows and icicled moustachios.

The deep-voiced, bearded priest knows me from of old and with a glance of friendly recognition goes on with the service. Congregation there is none, save two or three old peasant-women, the verger and an acolyte.

The last *amín* intoned, we look about the church—the family church of the Schouváloffs. We admire the rich *eikons*, the marble tombs. Half sunk in one corner is that beautiful one erected by Count Paul over the remains of his first wife—now *he* lies there beside her! Outside, a little later, we gaze in awed silence at the fire-new mausoleum wherein are the remains of their only son, assassinated by the revolutionaries at Odessa in the troublous days of 1906. Poor Pável Pávlovich! he was the first person introduced to me on my arrival in St. Petersburg; we had been companions very frequently since; never unfriends, yet never quite friends. He was from childhood grave, upright, loyal—a model of virtue, I believe—but to me never sympathetic. He did his duty unflinchingly, as he saw it, and died a cruel death—God rest his soul in peace!

I lingered a few moments, bare-headed, beside my friend's grave, while memories thronged. I saw once more the rough keepers and woodmen bear in the coffin; I saw again the tears glisten in the kindly, humorous

eyes of Count Paul and heard his low-voiced "That's what *he* would have wished, Iván Ivánovich."

I greeted the dead man silently. . . . "Is it well with you, old friend?" and standing there I felt that it must be well; for, whatever the dross, the pure gold of that fine and friendly nature must far, far outweigh it. And I knew that if the dead can see he must rejoice at this visit from Iván Ivánovich; a smile surely must have lit his face as he saw me come speeding over the snow this wintry morning—for once, at least, no "lazy log"—to the sound of the matin-bells . . . but hark! again the long-drawn shout, far-off this time, "c-o-m-e o-n . . . " my companions are already at the foot of the hill.

I motion a last *adieu* with left hand, cram cap on head with right, launch downwards, and, leaping perilously the frozen road, reach the bottom at a speed of twenty miles an hour.

My friends know well that I am in no mood for chatter. I keep behind them all the way home, sad and glad—sad for "the days that are no more"; glad in the consciousness of a great possession—the memory of a very perfect friendship.

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Sketch Map

for

"RUSSIA IN THE EIGHTIES"

0 50 100 150 200 250 Miles

0 250 Versts

————— Railways

For fuller detail in areas marked A & B see the large scale maps of Voronej and St. Petersburg and District.

- 1 Vaarpa Saari
- 2 Kexholm
- 3 R. Orodej
- 4 Titelmunde
- 5 R. Aa

